GRACE:

THE

TRUTH and GROWTH

AND

DIFFERENT DEGREES

thereof.

The summe and substance of

XV. SERMONS.

Preached by that faithful and painful servant of Jesus Christ,

Mr. CHRISTOPHER LOVE,

Late Minister of *Lawrence Jury*,

LONDON.

They being his last SERMONS.

To which is added a *Funerall Sermon*, being the very last Sermon he ever preached.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of Mustardseed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, &c. Mat. 13 31. 32

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To the Christian Reader.

OUr purpose in publishing this small Treatise, is not to make old sores bleed, or foment any ones discontent, or renew any ones griefe, concerning the much lamented death of this godly and Reverend Author; nor shall we mention what great losse the Church of God had in the death of so useful and hopeful a Minister: But we shall in a few words acquaint thee why this little piece is thus made publique.

There are many imperfect copies of Mr. *Love's* Sermons, which are likely to be obtruded into the world, by some who regard no other end in publishing and printing books, then their own private gains; To prevent which, we have from his own notes published these Sermons, and shall desire the Reader to

take notice, that whatever Sermons of this Author ſhall be thought fit to be publiſhed, ſhall be atteſted with ſome of our hands, who are intruſted with his Papers, and hope none will be ſo injurious to the Author and others, as to preſume to print any thing of Mr. *Love's* without the ſaid Atteſtation.

Thou haſt here but the marrow and ſubſtance of the laſt Sermons preached by that late faithfull Servant of God. Pulpit-repetitions and enlargments are here omitted, we having endeavoured to accommodate thee in the *price* in buying, and in thy *pains* in reading, that thou mightſt have much *fruit*, though there be not many *leaves*. Thoſe bookes are beſt that have much worth and weight in a little bulk, and ſuch is this if we miſtake not.

Libri rerum non verborum ſecundi.

The Reverend Author, though he had not attained many yeers, yet he had gotten much experience about ſoul-affairs. Theſe were his laſt Meditations, and therefore the more deſired by, and we hope will be

be the more acceptable to those, to whose souls his Ministry was profitable and precious. Thou wilt finde here no new, uncouth, and unscripturall expressions, but plain practicall Doctrine, old Divinity, sound, solid, and conscience-searching truths. The gracious Author preaching and pressing them on the hearts of his hearers, from his own experience of them. Neither wilt thou meet with any railings or reproachings of the publick and present Governours, (the usual, though the most unjust, charge against the *Presbyterian* Ministers.) This whole discourse is not about *State*, but *Soul-affairs*, which is another reason why it is published, to check the licentiousnesse of this Age, which hath surfetted upon absurd and unprofitable Pamphlets. The Lord give thee to have thy spiritual *senses exercised, to discern both good and evil.* Heb. 5. 14. But alas! What between *State-mutations*, and *Church-dissensions*, spiritual truths lie by neglected. It is much to be feared the *Work of Grace* goes on but slowly, few enquire into

their Soul-state. But to enquire into our spirituall estate is the best husbandry in the world. If we are to be *diligent to know the state of our flocks*, Pro. 27.23 then surely we should *give all diligence* to know how it is with our precious and immortall souls. The benefit and profit of this soul-searching, will abundantly recompence our pains and care in performing it.

There are two great mistakes to which the best Christians are very subject.

1. Either to despise and disparage the work of grace, if their measures be small.
2. Or else, if their attainments be somewhat considerable, to sit down contented with their acquired measures.

We beseech you take heed of both these evils, which are both alike; unthankfulnesse to God, and injuriousnesse to your own soul, the one despiseth the truth, and the other neglects the Growth of *Grace*.

1. If thou art one of the tender Plants in Christs Orchard, a weak

Lamb

Lamb in his Flock, a Babe in his Family, yet Oh, despise not *the day of small things in thy soule*; though thy gifts be few, & thy comforts fewer, yet tread not out thy selfe the *smoaking flax*; *stay thy selfe upon his name who is a rock of Ages, and whose work is perfect*, and his grace unchangable, *who will bring forth judgement unto victory*. Sleight not the least measure of grace: though the first and ruder draught be but drawn on thy soule, yet be comforted in this, that the image of Christ is begun to be renewed there. But be sure thy grace be right. Temporary faith, partial obedience, mercenary love, pretended zeale, legall sorrow, feigned humility, may make up a lifelesse picture of a professor, *who hath the form without the power of Godlinesse*: but it is true *Grace* that makes a true Christian. Common gifts and graces may bring a man neer heaven, but they will never bring a man into heaven. This Treatise therefore will teach thee to bring thy grace to the true touch-stone. It is one of the saddest

conſiderations that can ſettle on the heart of a Chriſtian, to think how high a formall hypocrite may goe towards Heaven with his ſeeming grace, and how low a true child of God may fall by ſin towards Hell, and yet have real *Grace*. It is a dreadfull thing to think how many Profeſſors in our age reſt in duties performed, and parts acquired, and never examine themſelves whether they are in the faith, and have attained that true *Grace* which Reprobates and hypocrites can never have. When we finde in Scripture, [a] *Cain ſacrificing*, [b] *Pharaoh confeſſing his ſin*, [c] *Ahab faſting*, [d] *Saul weeping*, [e] *Jehu reforming*, [f] *Judas repenting and reſtoring*, [g] *Simon Magus believing*, [h] *Herod rejoycing, and* [i] *Felix trembling at the Word*, and yet not one of theſe had one dram of *Grace*. How carefull ſhould we then be to examine and prove our ſelves whether we are in a ſtate of true grace? Oh! it is very ſad to fall ſhort of them that fall ſhort of Heaven. As for the moſt part of Profeſſors of our times; it is much

a Gen. 4. 3.
b Ex 9.27
c 1 Kings 21.27.
d 1 Sam. 24. 16.
e 2 Kings 10 16.
f Mat. 27. 3
g Act. 8. 13
h Mar. 6. 20.
i Acts 24. 25.

much to be feared, that their ſpirituall trading lies more for the increaſe of gifts and parts, (in which their Religion conſiſts) then for *Grace*, which is the true reaſon why we have ſo little truth and peace amongſt us: for parts puffe up the minde, pride begets contention, and contention encreaſeth errour. Former times had leſſe gifts, but more *Grace*, leſſe knowledge and more conſcience.

Plus ſcientiæ, minus conſcientiæ.

1. If thou art one of thoſe, that upon good Scripture-grounds canſt ſay thou haſt the truth of *Grace*, labour then after growth in *Grace*. Oh labour, that whilſt others are joyning *houſe to houſe, and laying field to field, till they be placed alone in the midſt of the earth, that you give all diligence to adde to your faith vertue, and to your vertue knowledge, and to your knowledge temperance, and to your temperance patience, and to patience godlineſſe, and to godlineſſe brotherly-kindneſſe, and to brotherly-kindneſſe charity, that theſe graces may be in you and abound, that you may be neither barren nor unfruit-*

Iſa 5.8.

2 Pet. 1.6, 7,8.

full

full in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus.

No Chriſtian ſhould content himſelfe with any meaſures of *Grace* attained, for he is like to make uſe of all the *grace* he hath, had he a *Benjamins* portion. The time is comming when one dram of true *grace*, will be of more worth then all the world. The comforts of *grace*, *the joy and peace of believing*, will be Cordials to you when you are dying, and will ſet up ſuch a light in the ſoule, which the ſhadow of death ſhall neither damp nor darken. But alas! moſt men are labouring, more after wealth then faith, more after greatneſſe in the world then true *grace*, of whom when they die it may be ſaid, *They had laid up goods for many yeers*; but it cannot be ſaid, *In them was found ſome good thing towards the Lord.* Men doe uſually lay up riches for a deare yeere, they'l ſay, they know not what need they may have before they come to die: Be then as wiſe and provident for your precious ſouls. Your temptations and trials

Plus valebit conſcientia pura quàm marſupia plena.

trials may be ſuch, that you may have uſe for all your *faith* and *patience*. *Eate* (ſaid the Angel to *Eliiah*,) *for the journey is long*. It is no ſhort way to Heaven, nor is the oppoſition ſmall thou ſhalt meet withall in thy paſſage thither. Oh then get thy ſoule well ſtored with ſpirituall proviſion of grace, and the comforts of it. It is true, thy ſafety is in the being, but thy comfort ſtands in the ſtrength and activity of thy graces. Weake *Grace* is ſaving, but ſtrong *Grace* is comfortable; truth of *grace* ſhal be rewarded with heaven, growth of *Grace* doth, as it were, antedate heaven. The leaſt true *grace* wil bring thee to Heaven, but the more *Grace* thou haſt, the fitter for, and ſurer thou wilt be of Heaven. The Lord make theſe and all the labours of his ſervants profitable to his Church. *Ye therefore, beloved ſeeing you know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſſe. But grow in* Grace, *and in the knowledge of our* Lord

Rev. 13. 10

1 Kings 19. 7.

2 Pet. 3. 17 18.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and for ever. *Amen.*

Reader we remain

Ready to serve thee in thy Soul-affairs,

London, *February* 13. 165⅓.

EDMUND CALAMY.

SIMEON ASHE.

JEREM. WHITAKER.

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

1. Kings 14. part of the 13. verse.

Sermon I. At *Lawrence Jury, London. March* 9. 165$\frac{0}{1}$.

——Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel *in the house of* Jeroboam.

THis Chapter conteins in it *Abijahs* Prophesie, foretelling what dismall judgements should befal *Ieroboam* and his posterity, for his Idolatry in worship, and defection from the Government and house of *David*. For which sins *God did destroy him and his posterity*: and not only the bad,[a] but the good were punished for their fathers guilt. For so it is intimated in this verse, out of which the Text is taken. Here was a young man, *Ieroboam's* son that should die for the fathers fault; and yet here was a mitigation of the punishment, that he should not die after the same manner that the rest did, *he shall go to his grave in peace, because in him there is found some good, &c.* Behold the goodnesse of God! a little good in him, and yet the great God takes notice of the little good in him. God found as it were one pearle in a heap of pebbles, one good young man in *Jeroboams* household, that had some good

[a] 1 Kings 15.29.

in him towards the Lord God of Israel.

In the whole verse, three parts.

I. A lamentation for the death of this son of *Jeroboam*; It is said, *all Israel shall mourn for him*, and so they did, *v.* 18. ——which argued there was goodness in him; for if he had not been desired and prized while he lived, he would not have been so lamented at his death.

II. A limitation of his punishment, he only of *Jeroboams* family shall come to the grave, the rest of his posterity that died in the City, dogs should eat, and him that dieth in the field, should the fowles of the ayre devoure. *vers.* 11.

III. The commendation of his life, *in him was found some good, &c.* (of this I am now to treat.)

He is commended by the Holy Ghost; for his goodnesse is set forth.

1. By the quality of his goodnesse; it was a good thing, not a good word only, or a good purpose or inclination, with which too many content themselves, but it was a good action.

2. By the quantity of it; it was but some little good thing that was found in him, and yet that little good God did not despise or over-look.

3. By the sincerity of his goodnesse; there are two notable demonstrations of this young mans goodnesse.

1. It was towards the Lord God of Israel.

2. It

2. It was in *Jeroboams* house.

1. His goodnesse was towards *the Lord God of Israel.* This argued *Pauls* sincerity, that in his [b] speaking, writing and actions he could and did appeal to God. That Religion saith the Apostle, *is* [c] *pure and undefiled*, that is, so *before God and the Father*. Many Hypocrites may be good towards men, who are not so towards God; to be rich indeed, is to *be* [d] *rich towards God*. True repentance is [e] *repentance towards God*; and he is unblamable indeed that is [f] void of offence *towards God*, as well as *towards men*.

2. He was good in the house of *Jeroboam*. A wicked man may seeme good in a good place, but to be good in a bad place argues men to be good indeed. To be good in *Davids* house, this was not so much; but for this young man to be *good* in the house of *Jeroboam* his father, whom the Scripture brands for his Idolatry, that *he made all Israel to sin* and yet could not make his son to sin; this argued he was sincerely good: as it did argue *Lots* sincerity to be righteous in *Sodom*; for *Job* to be good in *Chaldea*; and to be Saints in *Nero's* Palace, and to feare God in *Jeroboams* family, this is goodnesse indeed.

There is onely one difficulty in the Text, *viz.* What was that good thing that was found in *Abijah*.

For answer to this, 'tis true, the Scripture doth not particularly expresse what that good thing was which was found in him: but

b 2 Cor. 1. 2. 19. Gal. 1. 20.
c Jam. 2. 27
d Luke 12. 21.
e Act. 20. 21.
f Act. 24. 16.

but *Toſtatus* and P. *Martyr* affirme from the Hebrew Rabbins, that when the Jews of the ten Tribes did on their appointed times repair to *Ieruſalem* to worſhip according to the command of God, and *Jeroboam* commanded Souldiers to intercept them: this *Abijah* did hinder the ſouldiers to kill them, and gave them paſſes to go to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip God, and incouraged them therein, notwithſtanding the rage of his father, who had forſaken the true worſhip of God, and ſet up Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

Others think the goodneſſe of this young Prince was in this, that he would not conſent to his father in taking away the government from the houſe of *David*; but where the Scripture hath not a tongue to ſpeak, we have not an eare to hear, and therefore we ſhall not undertake to determine what the Scripture hath not determined.

There are many collaterall obſervations which I ſhall deduce from the ſeverall circumſtances in the text, and but name ſome of them. From the conſideration that this good *Abijah* died:

1. *Obſervation.*

Good men, and uſefull, and hopefull inſtruments may be taken away by death, when wicked men may live long upon the earth.

Bad *Jeroboam* lived long; his good ſonne died ſoon; ſo true is that of *Solomon*, *A righteous man may periſh in his righteouſneſſe, when a wicked man may prolong his dayes in his wickedneſſe*; Briers and Thorns and Thiſtles wither

ther not so soon as Lilies and Roses, they may be taken out of the world, of whom the world is not worthy, and they remaine behind, who are not worthy to live in the world.

2. From the consideration of the death of godly *Abijah*, when wicked *Nadab* the other son of *Ieroboam* lived, —— Observe

That good children may be taken away by death from their parents, when ungodly children may live to be a shame and a curse to their parents

3. From the consideration of the cause why this gracious young man died so soon, it was for his fathers sins, as we may gather from *vers.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

That good children as well as bad may be outwardly punished, for the sins of their parents.

4. From all *Israels* lamenting the death of this hopefull young man; Observe

That good men who have been, and might be further usefull in their lives, should be much lamented at their death; they that have lived desired, should die lamented.

5. From these words, *he shall go to his grave in peace*;

It is a great blessing to go to ones grave in peace in times of war and common calamity.

He was good towards God;

He is good indeed, who is so to God, as well as unto men; many are good in mans sight, that are not so in the sight of God. —

There are two other circumstances upon which I shall a little inlarge my selfe, before

1 Kings 16.26.

2. *Observation.*

3. *Observation.*

4. *Observation.* Isa. 57.1. 1 ——

5. *Observation.*

6. *Observation.* Rom. 2. 28.

I come to the main point I intend to handle

From the age of this son of *Ieroboam*, who is here commended for his goodnesse, it is said, *he was a childe*, vers. 12. Whence it may be observed,

1. *Doct.* *It is very commendable to see goodnesse in young people: to see young men good men, is a very commendable thing.*

There were many good men in that time but to be good so soon as *Abijah* was, when he was a child, the Scripture records this to his praise.

1. I shall shew you that it is a commendable thing to see young men good men. This I prove,

First, Because the Scripture makes very honourable mention of young men, when good men; as first of *Obadiah*, [h] *that he feared the Lord from his youth.* And it is recorded to the honour of [i] *Timothy* that *he knew the holy Scriptures from a child.* *Ierome* conceives that *Iohn* was the most [k] beloved disciple, because he was the youngest of all. [l] *God remembers the kindnesse of our youth.* God takes more kindly *the kindnesse of our youth* then of our age. It was matter of joy unto *Iohn*, that he found [m] *children walking in the truth.*

h 1 Kings 18. 12.

i 2 Tim. 3. 15.

k Joh. 13.

l Jer. 2. 2.

m 2 Epist. John 4.

Secondly, Because God commends morall and common goodnesse in the young man [n] in the Gospell, Christ is said *to love him*, for his moral goodnesse and naturall ingennity

n Mar. 10. 21.

2. The reason why it is so commendable in a young man to be a good man, is this, because

cause their temptations are more, and their affections are stronger to carry them from God; youth hath a stronger aptitude and proclivity to sinne then any other age, their blood is sooner stirr'd up to choler, and their strength to lust. As every relation hath its speciall sin, so every age of a mans life; old age is peevish and covetous; middle age proud, malicious and revengful; young men are usually rash, lustful and voluptuous; and therefore *Paul* bids o *Timothy fly all youthfull lusts*; and therefore seeing youth is exposed to so many temptations, and subject to so many corruptions,——it is rare to see young men good.

o 2 Tim. 2. 22.

Oh then be exhorted you that are young, to become religious betimes; and to quicken you hereunto, Consider.

1 *Use.*

1. If you be not good in your youth, you can never use the Psalmists arguments, *Cast me not off O Lord in the time of my old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth, v. 9.*—— and his argument he had before, *v. 5.* for *thou art my hope, and hast been my trust from my youth*, and who would be without such an argument on his death-bed?

Ps. 71. 9. compared with *v. 5.*

2. Consider, there are recorded in Scripture many young men that were good, of all sorts and conditions, and of all callings; and the Holy Ghost doth not only set down their goodnesse, but their age in which they were good: *Solomon* a young King, *Obadiah* a young Courtier, *Daniel* a young Prophet,

Iohn a young Apostle, *Timothy* a young preacher, and here *Abijah* a young Prince; and all these were good men, and are recorded for our example and incouragement.

3. Consider, that God in the dispensations of his grace bestowsit upon young men, and passeth by the elder. Thus *Abel* the younger was righteous, and *Cain* wicked: *Iacob* the younger brother loved, and *Esau* hated; Thus *David* the youngest of *Iesses* sons, and yet the best of them, and the chosen of the Lord.

1 Sam. 16. 11, 12.

God doth many times do as *Iacob* did when he blessed the children of *Ioseph*, he *stretched out his right hand* p *& laid it upon the head of* Ephraim *the younger*, —— so doth God in the dispensation of his grace many times pitch on the youngest, God saith, as *Ioseph*, of all the rest, *bring me Benjamin*, and gives him a double portion.

p Gen. 48. 14.

4. The time of your youth is the freest age of your life to betake your selves to the exercise of religion and duties of godlinesse. Young men that are servants, have more freedome and lesse cares then when they grow in yeers, and then cares & incumbrances of a family fill their hands and clog their hearts.

q 1 Cor. 7. 33.

5. Consider, if thou art not gracious in youth, the sins of thy youth may trouble thy conscience in thy old age. Many young men who are active and venturous in the heat of their youth, get those bodily bruises and blows, that they feel the ache thereof to their dying day. Thou that giveſt a blow or

a bruise to thy conscience in thy youth, mayest feel this in thy old age.

Those sins which now thou feelest not, may be a trouble to thy conscience, and an aking to thy heart, when thou lyest on thy death bed. And though God do not remēber the sins of your youth to damne your souls; yet he may make you remember them so as to be a trouble to your consciences. r These things which are the joyes of youth, may be the bitter burdens of old age. Take heed of laying a loade on thy conscience when thou art young, lest God *write bitter things against thee* when old, *and make thee to possesse the sins of thy youth, and fill thy bones with the sins of thy youth.*

r *Quæ fuerunt inania juventutis gaudia, hæc sunt acerba senectutis gravamina.* Job 13.26. Job 29.11.

A second use of reproofe of two sorts of people.

First, Of those who instead of being good when young, are wicked when they are young, such as fill their youth with manifold evils. Usually youth is subject to these evils:

1. Pride is the sin of youth, a Preacher *must not be a young novice, lest he be lifted up with pride.* 1 Tim. 3.6.

2 Rashnesse and indiscretion is usually the sin of a young head. *Exhort* young *men* (saith *Paul* to *Titus*) *to be sober-minded*, to be *discreet or wise*; how rash and heady was the *counsell of the young men to Rehoboam*, which made him lose his Kingdom? yeeres teach experience. Tit. 2.6. σωφρονεῖν

3. Luſtfulneſſe, which was the ground of *Paul's* caution to *young Timothy*. If *Timothy*, who was ſo abſtemious a man, that *Paul* gave him advice to *drink ſome wine with his water*, had need of this caution, how much more have they that are not ſo exerciſed in duties of mortification? Which gave *Solomon* ground to give that counſel, *Put away the evils of thy fleſh, for childhood and youth are vanity*. He was a young man that followed the harlot to her houſe.

2 Tim. 1. 22

Eccl. 11. 10

Prov. 7. 7.

4. Fickleneſſe and unſetledneſſe of judgement; and therefore in times of errour, the younger ſort are moſt ſubject to be ſeduced; *Children are toſſed to and fro with every winde of doctrine*: the hebrew calls a young man נער, which comes from נער, and ſignifies to toſſe to and fro, intimating that they are unſetled and unſtaied in their judgements and reſolutions. How ſoon was the minde of that rich and forward young man changed, mentioned in the Goſpel?

Eph. 4. 14.

נער from נער movit de loco in locum. Mat. 19. 22. 2 King. 2. 23.

5. To ſcoffe and condemn the aged; they were children who did mock the aged Prophet; the young men derided *Job*.

Job 30. 1, 12.

6 Senſual pleaſures and paſtimes,——they do rejoyce and chear their hearts in the days of their youth; *Sampſon made a feaſt, for ſo uſed the young men to do.*

Eccl. 11. 9. Judg. 14. 10. Job 1. 4.

Secondly, Reproof lights heavily on thoſe who ſeem to be good in their youth, but in their old age caſt off goodneſs; how many are like *Joaſh*, who ſeemed to be a good

young

young man whilst he seemed to be under the tuition of *Jehojada*, but when he was dead, how did he break out.

How many are there in the world, who have lost their affection and desires after God, which they had in their youth? It was a brand set upon *Solomon*, who, though when young, *was well taught by his mother*; yet when he grew old, his wives turned away his heart from God. So *David* had his first days which were better then his last. Even so amongst us, we have too many, who when they were young did love Religion, and delight in Ordinances, and when they became old have abated exceedingly, which may make them to fear the sincerity of their goodness; for he that is truly good in youth will be so in his old age. Prov. 31. 1.

A second remarkable circumstance is this, that this young *Abijah was good in the house of Jeroboam*. Whence observe

That it is a great commendation for men to retain their goodness whilest they live in bad places and families; That this is so, we may see by that commendable mention the Scriptures make of such as were good in evill places. Thus God commends the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satans seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas my faithful Martyr, who was slain amongst you, where Satan dwelleth.* *Pergamus* was a City Rev. 2. 13.

more given to Idolatry then all the Cities of Asia, and yet *there were some that held fast the name of Christ, and did not deny his faith:* to be a Saint in *Nero's* family is very commendable.

Phil. 4. 22.

And the reason thereof is,

1. Because many of Gods children have failed, and abated much of their goodnesse in bad places. How did *Peter* fall in the High Priests Hall; though when in good company he was zealous, yet there he denied Christ. So *Abraham* when he was in *Gerar*, and *Isaac* also, denied their wives: so *Joseph* in *Pharaoh's* Court, and learn't the Court-Oath, to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*. Hence God commands the children of *Israel*, not to mixe themselves with the Heathens, *lest they learn their manners and customs.* Bad places are like bad aire for zeale to breath in: as sheep amongst briars lose part of their fleece, so good men in bad company lose part of their goodnesse. As one scabbed sheep may infect a whole flock: so one root of bitternes may spring up and defile many.

Heb. 12. 15

2. *Reas.* Because it is a cleer evidence of the sincerity of a mans goodnes, to be good in a bad place. This shews thy grace to be grace indeed, when thou hast discouragements to be good, and then art holy; this is a demonstration that thou art sincerely good, and that thy goodnes is not counterfeit and taken up upon any sinister and hypocritical end. It is good to be good with the good, but it

it is most excellent to be good amongst the bad, and to be best amongst the worst.

From hence learn the power and unlooseableness of saving grace; grace makes a man good in the worst times; let a man be cast into prison or bad company (which is the worst temptation) yet he shall not lose his grace: true grace is compared to oyle; now cast oyl into a vessel of water, and the oyl will not mix with the water, but will lie on the top; grace will swim upon the water of temptation. As all the water in the salt sea cannot make the fish salt: so all the wicked in the world cannot change the nature of grace; a good man like the fish retains his goodness in bad places; thus *Joseph* retained his goodnesse in the Court of wicked *Pharaoh*, *Nehemiah* in the Court of *Artaxerxes*, *Obadiah* in *Ahab*'s Court, *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezzars*, the Saints in *Nero*'s houshold, and *Abijah* in wicked and idolatrous *Ieroboam*'s house. *Use.* 1.

Though it be a commendable thing to be good in bad places; yet you ought to bewail your living in bad places: it is your misery, though not your sin; thus did *Isaiah*, *Wo is me, I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips*; so *David*, *Wo is me that I dwell in* Mesech, *and have my habitation in the tents of* Kedar, i. e. with the sinful, idolatrous and barbarous people, the posterity of *Ishmael*; thus *Lots righteous soul was vexed from day to day* 2. Isa. 6. 5. Psal. 120. 5. Gen. 25. 13.

2 Pet. 2. 7, 8. *day, while he dwelt in Sodom, and saw their unclean conversations.*

3 Hence we may gather, that it is our duty, the more bad the place or family is where God hath cast your dwelling, the better and more blameless you should labour to be; you will by this adorn your Profession, stop the mouths of adversaries, allure and win others to imbrace Christianity. Phil. 2. 15. ——— *We must be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, amongst whom ye shine as lights in the world.* Stars shine brightest in a dark night, & fire burneth hottest in a cold and frosty day: so should thy star of profession shine brightest in darkest places, where thou livest, and the fire of thy zeal burn hottest in cold time, when the love of many waxes cold.

4 Then certainly it is a vain plea for men to excuse their wickedness, because they live in bad places; this was *Abrahams* fault to excuse his lie by being at *Gerar*. *Seneca* blames men of laying the fault of their badness on the place where they live: *I am not ambitious by nature, but no man that lives at* Rome *can be otherwise. I am not given to costly and rich Apparel, but I must do so when I am at* Rome. It is the badness of thy heart, and not the place that makes thee bad; no place though never so good, can exempt a man from sin; the Angels sinned in Heaven, *Adam* in Paradise, *Judas* in Christs family, and no place though never so bad can excuse a man from sin.

Gen. 20. 11 Non ego sum ambitiosus, sed nemo Romæ aliter vivere potest: non ego sum sumptuosus, sed urbs ipsa magnas impensas exigit. *Sen.*

If

If it be so commendable to be good in bad places, then it is abominable to be bad in good places, to be dirty swine in a fair meadow; Oh how many are bad in good families, who despise good counsels, and hate the duties of Religion in religious families! If it was bad for *Peter* to be evil amongst the High-Priests servants, how abominable was it for *Judas* to be a Traitor amongst the Apostles, and in the family of Christ himself! 5

Delight not to be in bad places and company; to delight in such, argues thou art bad thy self. We are to *hate the garment spotted with the flesh*; some expound this, *To avoid the occasions of sin*: but Mr. *Perkins* gives this sense, *To hate bad company*, and he saith, it alludes unto the Ceremonial law, *That if a man had a leprous garment, or a garment any otherwise made unclean, his company was to be avoided.* God therefore gave that command, *Not to plough with an Oxe and an Asse together* the Asse was an unclean creature, and the Oxe was one of the clean beasts, and they must not be in the same yoke. *To note,* (say Divines) *that Gods people and prophane persons must not be yoked together.* Though they may occasionally meet together, yet they must not be yoked together; a man may trade with the wickedest man alive, commerce is not forbidden, but our joyning with wicked men in a needlesse familiarity. 6

Bonus mali consortio facilè pejerat.

Jude 23.

Lev. 15. 4.

Deut. 22. 10.

1 Cor. 5. 9, 10.

Psa. 26. 4, 5

Keep company with the godly, and delight your selves with such as are good. It is lawful 7.

lawful to be in bad company when a just occasion calls, but it is profitable to be in good company. Pro. 13. 20 *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but he that is a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* As a man that comes in a shop of perfumes will carry away the sent with him: so a man by conversing with the godly shall carry away some good with him. Labour to to chuse those for thy companions from whom thou mayest get some good; but if God should cast thee into a house like the family of *Jeroboam*, imitate good *Abijah*, of whom it is said, *That in him was found some good to the Lord God of Israel, even in the house of Ieroboam.*

Sermon 11. At *Lawrence Jwry, London.* 1650.

1 KING. 14. part of the 13. verse.

—— *Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of* Israel, *in the house of* Jeroboam.

HAving dispatched the Observations which may be gathered from the circumstance in the Text, I come to that main Doctrine which I intend to handle, which is;

Doct. *God doth not onely exactly take notice of, but also tenderly cherish, and graciously reward the smallest beginnings, and weakest measures of grace,*

grace, which he works in the hearts of his own people.

I might produce a cloud of testimonies to confirm this point. Our Saviour Christ said, that *he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.* Mat. 12. 20 Observe, it is not said; the strong Oak shal not be broken, but the *bruised reed* shall not be broken; not the light and flaming torch, but the *smoking flax*, shal not be quenched. —— *Smoking flax*, where there is but little fire, and much smoke of infirmity, yet Christ will not quench it, *i. e.* he will cherish it; here is the figure *Meiosis*, here is lesse spoken then intended. —— He will be so far from quenching, that he will cherish the *smoking flax*; as in another place God is said, *that he will not despise a broken heart*, i. e. He will highly esteem it. *Verba potius ad cor nostrum quàm ad cor Dei accommodata.* Psal. 51. 17

Solomon speaks of the fig-tree putting forth her green figs, and the Vine with her tender grapes gives a good smell, that is, the little measure and weak beginnings of grace in young Converts, do please the Lord Jesus Christ, and are as a sweet smel in his nostrils. Again, Christ saith, *Let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranate bud forth.* Cant. 2. 13. The green buds are regarded by Christ as well as the ripe and grown fruit. Cant. 7. 12.

In opening of the Doctrine, I shall endeavour to clear these two things;

1. That some of Gods people have but weak measures and small beginnings of grace.

2. Though

2. Though there be but a little grace, yet God will regard and reward it.

1. *Proposition.* 1. That some of Gods people have but a little grace, —— have but the beginnings of grace wrought in their souls.

In the handling whereof are three things,

1. The truth of the Proposition may be made good from the Scriptures.
2. I will lay down notes of discovery, to know such as have but small measures of grace wrought in them.
3. And then shew why God in his wisdom will not suffer his people to be all of an equall strength and stature in grace.

1 *Quest.* 1. *How doth it appear that some of Gods people are but weak in grace?*

1. *Answ.* 1. By the different names and titles that are given unto Christians in holy Scriptures, arguing they are of different measure and growth in grace. 1. *s* Some are called *strong men*, and others *weak*. 2. Some are called *t Babes in Christ*, and others called *grown men*. 3. Some are called *u Trees of Righteousnesse, Plants of renown, that grow like Cedars in Lebanon*: Others are but a *bruised reed*. Some are *x Kids in Christs flock, and Lambs*: Others *are as the He-Goats that go stately before the flock*. 4. Some have grace flaming forth in much zeal and vivacity, they have *y the spirit of burning*; and others are but *smoking flax*, i. e. Christians that have much of the smoke of infirmity, & but little of the flame of grace.

2. By

s Rom. 15. 1

t 1 Cor. 3. 1
1 Joh. 2. 14

u Isa. 61. 3. Psal. 92. 12 Mat. 12. 20

x Cant. 1. 8. 1 Joh. 1 21. 15, 16, 17.

y Isa. 4. 4.

2. By the Analogy that is between spiritual and natural differences of age, strength, and stature in man; the Holy Scripture exactly sets down all the different degrees of grace, under the similitude of the different ages of men. *2 Answ.*

1. There is a *z* forming of Christ in the heart, and so a spiritual conception. *z Gal.4.19*

2. There are those that are but new-born *Babes* in Christ. *1 Pet.1.23 & c. 2. 2.*

3. There are some that are advanced from infancy to be *Young-men.* *1 Joh.2.13*

4. There are some that are grown men in Christ, *Old men.*——And all this doth but set forth the different degrees of grace that are in Christians, some having less some more. *ibid.*

——In the Church of Christ, which is his Orchard, there are trees of all sorts, Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cynamon with all trees of Frankincense, Myrre and Aloes, &c. *Brightman* on this Scripture notes that hereby is meant the several sorts of Christians. Spikenard & Saffron are young weak Professors, these are tender Plants that scarce lift up the head above the ground. Calamus & Cynamon which are shrubs of two cubits high, note Christians of a middle size; & the other trees note Christians of a more eminent measure and growth in grace. *Cant.2, 14* *Brightman.*

A second question, *How may a man know himself, that he is but of a little measure and small beginning in grace?* *2 Quest.*

1. To be much in dependance on duties, argues *Answ. 1.*

argues thou art but weak in grace. A young Christian is like a young Carpenter, he makes many chips, & hath many blows, but doth not make such smooth work as an experienced Carpenter, who will make fewer chips, and at fewer blows better work: so young Christians, they are much in the use of duty, but they are apt to relie upon duty; they think duties make them Saints, & they are apt to make Saviours of their duties. Young Christians are 1. Affectionate in duties, and 2. Frequent in their duties. 3. And see not their failings in their duties, and so are apt to rest on their duties. As it is a signe of an Apostate Professor to cast off duty, so also a note of a young and weak Professor to rest too much upon his duties.

Asser. 2. 2. A weak Christian is not clearly insighted into the close & spirituall failings, which cleave to his performances. He doth see his gifts, and takes notice of his affections, but he doth not see the vanity of his minde, the unsoundness of his ends, his carnal dependance upon his duty, self-love and vaine glory; but in tract of time a grown Christian doth take notice of these things in himself; an experienced Christian will take as much notice of his failing in duty, as of his ability in it, and though he discerne an inlargement of gifts and graces in him at some times; yet he still discerns much spiritual pride, popular applause, ostentation of gifts, too much forwardnesse in setting out his parts, which a weak

weak Christian seldom perceives.

3. To have a scrupulous conscience about matters of indifferency argues a weak Christian; for so the Apostle cals them, *weak in the faith*, such as did binde the conscience when the Scriptures left it free. One believer thought he might eat any thing, and another doubted of the lawfulnes of eating sundry things. Now those that doubted, the Apostle cals *Weak; and the weak conscience is apt to be defiled.* Not to know our liberty, & to abuse our liberty, is an argument we have but little grace. Young Converts make more sinners then ever God made, they perplex and intangle themselves meerly in indifferent things. It is true, there ought to be a conscientious tenderneſse in all Christians: tenderneſse of conscience is our duty, but a tormenting, intangling scrupulosity is our infirmity: and yet as a weak Christian is better then no Christian, a weake faith is better then a dead faith; so a scrupulous conscience is better then a seared conscience.

Answ 3.

Rom. 14. 1. Rom. 15. 1.

Rom 14. 21. 1 Cor. 8. 7. c. 9. 2.

4. To be so intently set on the exercises of Religion as to neglect our particular callings, is a signe we are but weak in grace. It was a good saying of that famous man of God, Dr. *Sibbs*; *I like that Christian well, that will hear much and live much, that will pray much and work much.* In young Converts their affections are strong and stirring, and they think they can never hear enough, and they many times do neglect the duties of their

Answ. 4.

Dr. *Sibbs.*

callings, which doth argue their weakneſſe and infirmity. An experienced grown Chriſtian, is regular in his general and particular calling; ſo as the one ſhall not juſtle and hinder the other.

Anſw. 5. To have mens perſons in admiration argues weakneſſe in grace; ſuch were the *Corinthians* who had mens perſons in admiration: the Apoſtle calls them, *Children, Babes and poor, low, and carnall Chriſtians*: *Babes*, though they had the life of Chriſtians; yet they had but little of the ſtrength of Chriſtians. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 4. *They were carnal, they ſavoured more of the fleſh then of the Spirit.* Ignorance is often a cauſe of admiration; weak Chriſtians who have but little knowledge, are apt to be ſo taken with mens perſons, that one cryes, *I am of* Paul, and another, *I am of* Apollo, and ſo fall into the ſin condemned of having the faith of Chriſt with reſpect of perſons, to cry up one Miniſter, and to cry down others. Jam. 2. 1. Ἀσωπολαμψία. To idolize ſome, & to deſpiſe others argues that thou art weak in faith. A ſolid Chriſtian loves all good miniſters, and can contemne none.

Anſw. 6. To be eaſily ſeduced and led away into error, argues but weakneſſe in grace. Thoſe the Apoſtle calls *Children who are toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every winde of doctrine.* Eph. 4. 14. Weakneſſe of head doth argue that grace is not very ſtrong in thy heart. The way not to fall from our ſtedfaſtneſſe, is, *to grow in grace*; for the Apoſtle *Peter* doth joyn

those two duties together, having given a caution, *vers.* 17. *not to fall from steadfastnesse*, *vers.* 18. He gives counsel *to grow in grace*; strong Christians are stedfast, whereas weak ones are inconstant; and therefore those Professors that have been whirl'd about with divers opinions, it is an evidence they have but weak grace, if any. 2 Pet. 3. 17 18.

7. Such as are only acquainted with the common Principles of Religion, without further search into the depths and mysteries of Religion.——There are some Professors who may be fitly stiled *Babes* in Christ, because they have need of *milk*, being *unskilfull* in the Word of Righteousnesse, that is, in the more solid doctrines of the Gospel, concerning Christ, who is our Righteousnes. Thus the Disciples and Apostles of Christ knew but little of the mystery of our Redemption at first, and were ignorant concerning the [a] *Passion* of Christ, of the [b] *Resurrection*, as also of the [c] *Ascension* of Christ, till the Holy Ghost came and taught them these things, and brought those things to remembrance that Christ had taught them. *Answ.* 7. Heb. 5. 12, 13. [a] Luke 9. 45. [b] Mar. 9. 10. [c] John 16. 16, 17.

8. Weak Christians are strong in affections, and not in judgment, they have usually more heat then light; young Christians are like yong horses, they have much metal, but are not so fit for a journey, because they are not so through paced: there are many Christians that have much zeal and affection, but are not so solid in their judgments; but *Answ.* 8.

this argues much weakeneſſe in grace.

Anſw. 9. 9. A weak Chriſtian is one that cannot bear reproof. Sharp weather will diſcover whether thou art of a weak or ſound body; ——ſo a ſharp reproof will diſcover whether thou art of a weak ſpiritual temper & conſtitution. When *Nathan* came to *David* he could bear the reproof, though the Prophet told him to his face, *He was the man that had ſinned*; but *Aſa*, though a good man, could not endure the faithfull reproof of a Prophet, *But was wroth with the* Seer, *and put him in the priſon-houſe.*

2 Sam. 12. 7, 2 Chron. 16. 10.

Anſ. 10. 10. A weak Believer is one that can truſt God for his ſoul, but not for his body.—— So Jeſus Chriſt argues that thoſe had *little faith*, who did expect heaven and happineſſe from God their Father, and durſt truſt him with their ſouls and eternal concerments, & yet durſt not truſt him for food & raiment. There are thoſe that dare truſt God for heaven, and yet not truſt him for earth, but theſe are ὀλιγόπιστοι *of little faith.* The Diſciples when they wanted bread, began to reaſon amongſt themſelves how they ſhould be ſupplyed. ——*Ob ye of little faith* (ſaith Chriſt) *Why do you thus reaſon? Can you truſt me for the bread of eternal life, and dare you not truſt me for the bread of this life?*

Mat. 6. 30.

ὀλιγόπιστοι.

Mat. 16. 8.

1 *Uſe.* Be not then diſcouraged you that diſcern in your ſelves but ſmall meaſures of grace; look on your wants and imperfections, ſo as to grow in grace, and not to be content with any

any measure: But look not on the small beginnings in grace, as discouragement to you. When you see in a field a great Oake, you may say, this great tree was once but a small acorne. Those Christians who are now but small spriggs, may hereafter be tall Cedars: say to thy soul, though I am but weak, yet I shall be strong: grace where it is true will be growing, the *smoaking flax* may be a burning and shining lampe in Gods Candlestick: and therefore as you must not be content with the greatest measure of grace; so neither be discouraged with the least measure of Grace. A grain of mustard seed, may grow a great tree. Matt. 17. 20

2 *Use.* Content not your selves with small measures of grace; a little of the world will not content you. —— In the womb a foot contents us, three foot in the Cradle, and seven foot in the grave: but betwixt the Cradle and the grave, a whole world will not content us, and shall a little grace content us? For wealth and desire of it, thou art as the Horse-leech which cries, give, give, and as the grave that never saith it is enough; and for grace wilt thou be content with a little?

1. KINGS 14. part of the 13. verſe.

——Becauſe in him there is found ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael *in the houſe of* Jeroboam.

Sermon III. At *Lawrence Jury, London.* March 16. 165°.

WE have given ſome Scripture Characters of thoſe that have a little grace, now we proceed to reſolve a third queſtion.

3 Queſt. 3. Queſt. *Why doth God ſo order and ordain it, that among his own people all ſhall not be of an equal ſtature in Chriſt, but there are of them ſome in whom there ſhall be but the beginnings of grace found?*

Anſw. *Anſw.* It is true, it is not with Regeneration as it was in the Creation; it is not with the Trees of Righteouſneſſe, as it was with the Trees of Paradiſe, which were created all perfect at the firſt: but it is not ſo in the Work of Grace, we are not perfectly ſanctified, nor at once, but we perfect holineſſe in the fear of God, and that by degrees; and God hath given to ſome of his people but ſmall beginnings and meaſures of grace, and that for theſe Reaſons.

1. To put a difference between our eſtate on earth, and our being in heaven. In heaven we ſhall all have an equal ſtature in grace, though

though it be disputed that there are different degrees of glory. But in heaven the *spirits of just men* shall all be *made perfect*, and there we shall all come unto the *measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ*. All believers here are justified by God alike. God doth not acquit the strong, and hold guilty the weak, but justification is alike to all, but our sanctification is not alike, but when we come to heaven, our sanctification shall be then as our Justification is now, that is, perfect and equal, we shall have not only a perfection of parts, but of degrees. Heb. 12.23 Eph. 4.13.

2. This is to make men live in a continual dependance upon divine influxe and supplies from the Spirit of God. If children should be born perfect men as *Adam* was created, we should not then see that continual need of, & dependance on our Parents. We are bred in the womb, and afterward born in the world, and then by degrees grow up from stature to stature; and so it is in grace, God deals thus.——Converting grace doth not make us so perfect as we shall be afterward. At the first Creation he made the trees all fruitful, and at their full growth; but now 'tis otherwise, they are first kernels or seeds, then plants before they are grown trees, and they have dependance on the influences of heaven: so we are first babes, then young men, and then strong men in Christ, to keep our souls in a dependance on Gods grace.

3. For the greater ornament of the myſtical body of Chriſt. In a natural body, if every member ſhould be of an equal bigneſſe, the body would be monſtrous: but the body is ſo proportioned in its different members, that the leſſer become ſerviceable to the greater, and ſo they all orderly diſcharge their mutual operations. As in Muſick there would be no harmony, if the ſtrings were all of an equal bigneſſe; but one ſtring being the baſe, and the other the treble, that makes the Muſick to be more melodious; ſo it is in grace, the different degrees of grace makes the body of Chriſt more harmonious. It is here as in ſome curious piece of needle work; if all the ſilkes were of one colour, it would not ſet out the work with ſo much luſtre and amiableneſſe, as the variety of colours will do.

4. To make Gods people ſee a neceſſity of maintaining fellowſhip and communion together, to edifie and build up each other. There would be no need of Chriſtian diſcourſe and holy fellowſhip, did not our weakneſſe require it. As among the members of the body, God hath ſo ordered them, that each member is ſerviceable to another, *the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee:* ſo among the people of God, ſome being weak, others ſtrong, there is a neceſſity of maintaining Communion together. There is an inſtinct in nature, that things weak in themſelves cleave to thoſe things which are ſtronger then they. *The Conies are but a feeble flock,*

1 Cor. 12. 21.

Pro. 30. 26

flock, yet make they their houses in the rocks: among *birds the Dove* the fillieſt and moſt ſhiftleſſe creature, yet ſhe hides her ſelf in *the clefts of the rock*; the Vine among the trees the weakeſt, yet it clings to the wall; the Hopps among the plants, yet it twines about the pole. So God hath ordered it in his infinite wiſdom, that ſome Chriſtians ſhould be ſtronger, and ſome weaker in grace, that the ſtrong may help the weake, and each be ſerviceable to one another. Cant. 2. 14.

5. To ſet out the glory of God in all his glorious attributes.

1. This different ſize of grace in Chriſtians, doth glorifie the mercy of God, and the free grace of God, who when there are ſome Chriſtians that have but a little grace, yet God rewards thoſe ſmall meaſures of grace with great meaſures of glory.

1. This magnifies the power of God, who when we are weak, yet the great God manifeſts his power in our weakneſſe, yea, *his ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſſe.* And therefore *Paul* addes, *verſ.* 10. *For when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, that is, *in Chriſt.* Is it not a demonſtration of great power, to keep a ſmall ſparke of fire that it ſhall not be quenched in a flood of water? yet behold that little ſpark of grace in thee, ſhall not be quenched in thee by the flood and torrent of thy corruptions. It is by Gods power that the leaſt meaſure of grace ſhall be preſerved. There is not ſo much of Gods power ſeen 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. Ver. 10.

seen in preserving the Angels, as a weak Believer; for the Angels, though mutable, yet are perfect creatures, they have no weights of sins and corruptions to pull them down. But alas! we have such a bias and inclination to sin, that we are apt to be turned aside from God every moment. The Power of God is more seen in preserving a poor believer in the state of grace, then in preserving the Angels in the state of innocency. And as Gods power is seen in preserving of a little grace, so it's also seen in the increasing of small grace. Grace is like to that cloud wch the Prophets servants saw, *which at first was but like a mans hand*, but afterwards, *it overspread the whole heavens*. True grace is of a spreading and increasing nature; and therfore the increase of our graces may be shadowed out in the vision of the waters of the Sanctuary, which at first *were* but *to the ankles* after that *to the knees*, then *to the loynes*, and at last so deep that they could *not be passed over*.

1 Kings 18 44,45.

Ezek. 47. 3,4,5.

3. God doth hereby glorifie his wisdome, As Gods wisdome is demonstrated in the world, by the variety of creatures, which are not all of the same bulk and bigness, but some bigger and some lesser: so in the Church of God, his wisdom appears, that some Christians are of greater, and some of a lesser measure of grace. Search the whole Creation and you shall find the wisdome of God in the variety of Creatures. In the heavens

vens there are the greater and leſſer lights, and ſo ſtarres of different magnitude, doe beautifie and beſpangle the heavens: ſo in the ſea there are greater and leſſer fiſhes: in the air the great Eagle and little Sparrow: on the earth the Elephant and little Dog: amongſt the creeping things there's the great Serpent and the little Piſmire: amongſt the vegetables, the tall Cedar and the Hyſop on the wall: And alſo amongſt the rationall Creatures, there is a Gyant and a Dwarfe: a grown man of a tall ſtature, and a childe but of a ſpan long. So is Gods wiſdome greatly illuſtrated, that as there is variety of natural proportions in the world; ſo there are various proportions of grace in his Church amongſt his children.

Before I come to apply this point, which is of very great uſe to Gods children, for their comfort; I ſhall lay down ſome generall Poſitions about ſmall meaſures of grace.

That in the Church there are found more weak Chriſtians then ſtrong, more young Converts then old and grown Chriſtians. 1. *Poſit.*

As in a Forreſt there are more young ſprouts then old trees, in a garden more young ſlips then old roots, in the world more young children then old men. In *Niniveh* there were 120000 Infants, but there was not ſuch a number of old men. *By how much things are perfect, by ſo much they are the fewer.* Look amongſt other creatures, thoſe that Jon. 4. 11. *Quò perfectiores, eò pauciores.*

that are of a bigger bulk are of a leſſer number, as in the ſea there are more young and little fiſh then great whales; on the earth the
Jer. 46. 23. ſmalleſt things are *innumerable*; in the aire there are more ſwarms of flies, then flocks of birds; ſo in the Church of God there are more that are young and weak Converts then old Chriſtians. It is with moſt Chriſti-
1 Sam. 20. 36. ans as it was with *Jonathans* ſignal arrows, which he ſhot to warn *David* by, of which two fel ſhort, and but one beyond the mark: ——So where one Chriſtian ſhoots home *to the mark of the price of the high calling in Chriſt Jeſus*, there are many fall ſhort.

2. *Poſit.* That there are many that have but weak meaſures and ſmall beginnings of grace, who have been a long time under the Profeſſion of Religion, and under the means of grace; ſuch were the Hebrews, *who for the time that they ought to be teachers, yet had need that*
Heb. 5. 12. *one ſhould teach them again, which be the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of milk and not of ſtrong meat*; and I may accommodate to this purpoſe
Mat. 19. 30 that ſpeech of Chriſt, *Many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt.* There are many who went out early, and took as it were the firſt ſtep in Profeſſion of Religion; and yet others have over-gone them, who went out after them. Many who have but weak meaſures of grace, have been of long ſtanding under the meanes of grace. And therefore Chriſtians are not to judge the ſtrength

ſtrength of grace by their Profeſſion, but by their Proficiency; It is not how many yeares you have been Profeſſors, but what experience and judgment have you gotten under Ordinances.

That the ſmalleſt meaſures of grace cannot merit eternal life and glory, becauſe great meaſures cannot. In merit there ought to be a proportion; but between grace and glory there is none; our ſervices are imperfect, our ſalvation is perfect; our ſervices but momentary, our glory is eternal; there is no compariſon between our light duties and eternal weight of glory. The Church in the *Canticles* is deſcribed according to the ſeveral parts of her body: *Her voice is ſweet, her Countenance comely, and her Doves eyes are beautifull. Behold thou art fair my Love,* (ſaith Chriſt) *thou haſt Doves eyes, thy Cheekes are comely with rowes of Jewels, and thy neck with chains of Gold.* Now it is very obſervable, that though Chriſt commends the Churches *Eyes, her Hair, her Teeth, her Lips and Speech, her Temples, her Breaſts, her Neck, &c.* yet he doth not commend her hands, to ſhew that though ſhe be adorned with many graces, as with ſo many beautiful ornaments and comely lineaments, yet ſhe merits nothing at the hands of Chriſt by all her doings. *The Churches beauty is perfect through the comelineſſe of Chriſt.*

That believers ought not to reſt ſatisfied with the ſmall meaſures of grace, they have received

3. *Poſit.*

Miſerationes Dei ſunt merita noſtra.

Deus coronat non merita noſtra, ſed dona ſua.

Cant. 2. 14

Cant. 1. 15

Cant. 1, 10.

Cant. 4. 1, 2 3, 4, &c.

Ezek. 16. 14.

4. *Poſit.*

received; though a little grace may bring you to heaven, yet you are not to take up therewith; but if you have got a little grace, labour for more; and to quicken you hereunto, Consider,

1. Small measures of grace are not so sensible and evidential to your selves, little things because they are little, are not seen. There may be a little dust hovering up and down in the aire, yet because it is small we see it not: this is the reason why Christians doubt; grace is little, and therefore it is not discern'd. Compare *Mat.* 8.28. *with Mar.* 4. 40. and we shal finde, that in *Matthew*, Christ saith, in his reproof to his disciples, *O ye of little faith.* And in *Mark*, *How is it that ye have no faith?* You may from the variety of these expressions gather this, that a *little faith* unexercised, as to comfort, is as good as no faith: it was so little, it was as good as none in that particular exigence they were in; you may have a little grace, and yet as to comfort, that little and weak grace may not further thee in a way of strong consolation. Not but that a weak Christian is accepted, that the weaker Christian may lie in his Fathers bosome;——yet it is the strength of grace that gives us strong consolation.

Mat. 8. 26. compared with Mar. 4. 40.

2. Consider, that small measures of grace, though they may bring you to heaven, yet they are not so usefull to others; a weak Christian cannot do much good in Christian converse, because they want judgement and

and experience in the wayes of God; and therfore such are not to be received to *doubtfull disputations*, but are to be born withal. Spiritual and strong Christians are most useful. Young converts are not fit for some exercises about Religion; they are not fit to strengthen others. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*: It is not to be understood of his first conversion; but of his Progresse in Religion, as if Christ had said; when thou art strengthned thy self, strengthen thy brethren. —— There are some duties which young converts are not fit for; *A piece of new cloth is not fit for an old garment, neither old bottles fit for new wine.* *Parens* and most Expositors refer that place to that case of conscience, *Why Christs disciples did not fast often?* —— They were like old and weak bottles, and so were not fit for that strong duty which was as new wine, and would be apt to break them. Christ said to his disciples, *That he had many things to say unto them, which in regard of their weaknesse they were not then able to bear.*

Rom. 14. 1, &c. 15. 1. Gal. 6. 1.

Luk. 22. 32

Mar. 16. 16 17. *Parens.*

Vers. 14.

Joh. 16. 12

3. Nor are small measures of grace so honourable to God; God is *glorified*, when his people *bear much fruit*. Much meanes and paines and little fruit, is a shame to the Vine-dresser; and therefore believers must not rest satisfied with smal measures of grace.

Joh. 15. 8.

It is our duty to improve those smal measures of grace which God hath given us. And consider, *As he that is faithfull in a little*

5. *Posit.*

Luk. 19. 17 *tle, God will make him ruler over much.* Use of grace will increase it; —— yet if thy grace be increased, ascribe all to God, it is Gods *pound*, and not thy *pains* hath gained.

1. *Use.* 1. *Use* is of comfort to weak Christians, to those young *Abijahs*, in whom there is found but some little good. Let such know to their comfort,

1. Though thy grace be but little in quantity, yet it is much in value. A pearle, though but litle in substance, yet it is of great worth, so a little grace is of great value; *The heart of a wicked man is nothing worth*; you may have much knowledge, and seeming grace, but no true worth. A shop full of barrels will not make a man rich, unlesse those vessels be full of commodities: gifts as to heaven, are but the lumber of a Christian, it is grace that makes him rich towards God.

Mat. 13. 31 32. 2. Though thy grace be little for the present, yet it will grow for the future to a greater measure. The little *grain of Mustard-seed (the least of seeds)* will in time grow up to a tree. Grace is fitly compared to *leaven*, which is of a spreading nature; to the *cloud* which the Prophets servant saw, and to *the waters of the Sanctuary*, which did all increase. An Infant of dayes shall proceed by degrees, till he become like the *Ancient of dayes*, *perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect.* Naturalists observe, that the seeds of the Cypresse-tree are very small, and yet of them proceeds a very high tree: Such is the birth and growth of grace.

Mat. 13. 33 1 Kings 18. 44. Ezek. 47. 3 4.

Arbor procera Cypressus.

3. The

3. The little measure of grace once begun in the soul shall be perfected. ——*God will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax until judgment be perfected in victory.* By *judgment* is meant there, the work of *Sanctification*, till that comes to be prevalent over corruption. *Paul* was confident, That he that *had begun a good work in them, would finish it, unto the day of Jesus Christ.* The Lord *is faithful and will do it.* God hath commanded us to *go on to perfection*, and he doth not command impossibilities. God blames men of folly, in not proceeding *to finish when they have begun to build.* God will never begin to reare up a structure of grace, and never finish it. ——Besides, God hath promised *to perfect that which concerns his servants.*

Mat. 12. 20

Phil. 1. 6.

1 Thes. 5. 24.

Heb. 6. 1.

Luke 14. 28, 29.

Psal. 138. 8.

4. The weakest Christian hath grace alike for quality, though not for quantity, though thy grace be not so much; yet it is as true as others: though but a convert of yesterday: yet grace as true as of an old Stander in Religion. ——*Faith is alike precious* in all believers; for quality, though not for quantity. ——Faith in all believers is alike,

2 Pet. 1. 1.

1. In respect of the Author, God.
2. The Object, it holds upon the same Christ.
3. The Means of working it are the same, *viz.* the Word and Spirit. A little grace is true grace. Fire in the sparke is as well fire as the flame: the filings of gold are gold, as well as the whole

wedge, a drop of water is water, as well as the whole Ocean. A little grace is true grace.

4. The End, it hath the ſame ſalvation of ſoul, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9.

Iſa. 27. 8. 5. God will not put your weak grace to tryal beyond your ſtrength; *God will debate with it in meaſure; he will ſtay his rough wind in the day of his Eaſt-wind.* —Thou ſhalt not have ſuch boiſterous ſtormes of temptation, as a ſtrong Chriſtian —*God will not*

1 Cor. 10. 13. *ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able.*

Iſa. 57. 16. God will take care *that the ſpirit ſhall not faile.*

6. Take this for your comfort, the leaſt meaſure of grace is enough to bring you to heaven. This is not ſpoken to make you idle, but only to comfort a perplexed conſcience. Many becauſe their grace is weak,

Rev. 3. 8. they think they have no grace. *I have ſet before thee* (ſaith Chriſt to the Church of *Philadelphia*) *an open door, and no man can ſhut it: for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my Word, and haſt not denyed my name.* It is true, our comfort lies much in the comparative degree, but our ſalvation in the poſitive degree; ſtrong grace hath ſtrong comfort; much faith will bring thee with much comfort to heaven; but a little faith will bring thee ſafely to heaven.

1. KINGS 14.
part of the 13. verse.

Sermon IV. At *Lawrence Jwy, London.* March 16. 165$\frac{0}{1}$.

——*Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of* Israel *in the house of* Jeroboam.

A case of conscience resolved.

BEfore we come to the use of Caution, I shall here state a case of conscience, which is this, *That if amongst Gods People there are some found that have but little grace, and but small measures found in them; Then what is the least measure of geace, less then which a man cannot be said to be in the state of grace?*

This is a practical and useful case.

First: this is of great use to Christians, who are but of a lower form in Religion, and have but little grace; yet they may know that little they have: and though they have not attained strength of grace; yet they may know the truth of grace in themselves: and although they come short of strong believers, yet they shall hereby know they go beyond the hypocrite: for the least measure of grace, is better then the greatest measure of gifts.

Secondly, the knowledge of this will quicken the soule unto due indevours after a further increase. This will teach them *to abound more and more.* 1 Thes. 4. 1

Now that we may discover what is the lowest degree of true grace, we shall shew you it in some of these following particulars.

1. A light in the soul to see the evill and the mischievous nature of sin, though not an ability to mortifie sin. The *entrance* of Gods Word *giveth light, and giveth understanding to the simple*, that is, the first work of the Word upon the soul, the very beginning of converting; grace in the heart is light, whereby thou seest sin and its sinfulnesse. And it was in the first creation, the first thing that was created was light: so in the second creation, the first work is *to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* Upon the work of conversion in the soule, the first degree of grace is to be inlightned with the *light of the living* So that where this light is wanting; there cannot be a work of grace.

Psal. 119.

Acts 26. 18

Job 33. 30.

2. A setled and fixed purpose of heart to leave sin, and to cleave unto God.——Grace doth not consist so much in an actual mortifying of sin, as in an unfeigned and settled purpose of heart to leave every sin.

The Prodigals resolution to go to his fathers house, argued some grace in him. *I will arise and go to my fathers house*, that is, I will leave my wicked company and courses and it is said, *His father saw him afar off, and ran and met him.* The Lord did work in him a purpose to leave his sin. *Gregory* on this

Luke 15. 17, 18.

plac

saith, *That remission of sin came to his heart before his Confession breake out in his speech to his father.* So *David*, *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confesse my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* *Augustine* observes on this place; *That David doth not say he did confesse, but he purposed to confesse his sin*, and yet this his purpose was true grace, though one of the least measures of grace. That holy purpose of *David* argued grace in him, when he said, *I have purposed and will not transgresse thy law, I have sworn and will perform it, that I wil keep thy righteous judgements.* It argues grace when a soul doth *cleave unto the Lord with ful purpose of heart.*

Greg.

Psal. 32. 5.

August.

Psal. 17. 3. Psal. 119. 106.

Act. 11. 23.

3. Another low measure of grace is this; A sensible complaint of the want of grace. Thus he that came to Christ, and said with teares, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*, he had grace. He doth not say, Lord help my faith, but *Lord help my unbelief.* His expression about his unbelief, did note not onely his want, but his sensiblenesse of his want. This is that *Poverty of Spirit*, which hath the first place in the Beatitudes; this is the lowest round of the ladder. The Apostle tels us, *That the Spirit helps our infirmities, in sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* Observe here, that it's not said the Spirit helps us with comforts and joyes, but *with sighs and groans*, whence we may learn that the Spirits help is as well *in sighs and groans*, and sensible com-

Mar. 9. 24.

Mat. 5. 3.

Rom. 8. 26.

plaints of our wants, as in holy raviſhments. Strength of grace is ſeen in holy joyes and raviſhments of Spirit, but truth of grace may be ſeen & diſcerned in ſighs, groans and complaints of our wants; they are ſaid to be *ſighes and groans which cannot be uttered*, not in regard of their greatneſſe; but (as Maſter *Perkins* obſerves) in regard of their weakneſſe. *Gods children at firſt wanting ability to expreſſe their own thoughts.* To be ſenſible of the want of grace is grace; for nature cannot make a man duly ſenſible of the want of grace, nor ſenſibly to complain of that want.

Perkins. *Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes ſtupent.*

4. Earneſt deſire after more grace, argues there is grace in the ſoul, though it be but ſmall. I do not place the beginning of grace in an ability to exerciſe grace; but rather in an earneſt deſire after grace. Deſire after grace, is accounted by God the grace it ſelfe we deſire; for ſo we finde that *Nehemiah's* deſire to fear the Lord, is counted for actuall fearing God. Deſires are the ſeeds of grace, and the graces themſelves are the bloſſomes and ſweet fruit that ſpring from thence; grace exerciſed is the fruit of a holy deſire after grace.

Neh. 1. 11. compared with Neh. 5. 15.

That the deſires after grace is in Gods acceptation grace, may be thus demonſtrated.

1. Gods people have appealed unto God, concerning the uprightneſſe of their hearts, meerly by their deſires;—ſo ſaith the Church. *The deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and the remembrance of thee; and with my*

Iſa. 26. 8, 9.

ſoul

ſoul have I deſired thee in the night.

2. God hath made many gracious promiſes, not only to the acting and exerciſing of grace, but to the deſires after grace. *Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſſe: for they ſhal be filled.* Mat. 5. 6. ——*If any man thirſt* (ſaith Chriſt) *let him come unto me and drink;* Joh. 7. 37. nay there is a general and univerſal invitation *to every one that thirſteth, to come to the waters;* and God hath promiſed *to give to him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of life freely.* Iſa. 55. 1. The Lord hath promiſed *to fulfil the deſire of thoſe that fear him, and wil heare the deſire of the humble.* Rev. 21. 6. Pſa. 145. 19 Pſal. 10. 17. So that by theſe promiſes it doth appear, that hungring and thirſting, & deſires after grace, are graces in Gods account and acceptation.

Now leſt men ſhould reſt in lazy and ſluggiſh deſires, and thereby neglect the exerciſe of grace, I ſhall give you an account in what ſenſe the Scripture reckons upon deſires after grace, to be grace.

1. They are ſupernatural deſires. 'Tis true there are natural deſires in the ſoul after that which is good, ——it is the language of nature, *Who wil ſhew us any good;* Pſal. 4. 6. now theſe deſires may and do ariſe from the motion of the natural and unſanctified will of man; and theſe deſires are after happineſſe, and not after holineſſe; ſuch were the deſires of *Balaam:* who ſaid, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.* Numb. 23. 10. This was but a natural deſire. But true deſires in

the soul are after heaven, for holinesse sake. *Bernard* notably sets out these desires of natural men, ——*That they have a desire of the End, and not of the Means.*

Voluntatem sibi, non mediorum. Bern.

2. *Desires* after grace are joyned with holy *indeavours*; and therefore the Apostle joyns *desire* and *zeal* together; to intimate that *true desires* are alwayes joyned with *zealous indeavours*. Thus the Apostle also joyneth a *readinesse of will*, and *performance* together. God will never accept the *will* for the *deed*, unlesse there be an indeavour to performe, what we say we are willing to do. And therefore *Solomon* rightly describes, how pernicious desires are without indeavours. *The desires of the slothfull* (saith he) *kil him, because his hands refuse to labour. Bernard* describes the laziness to the life: *Carnal men love to obtain, but love not to follow Christ: they will not indeavour to seek him whom they desire to finde.*

2 Cor. 7. 11.

1 Cor. 8. 11.

Pro. 21. 25

Cupiunt consequi, sed non sequi: non curant quærere quem desiderant invenire. Bern.

——Psal. 119. 20.

Psal. 42. 1.

3. Desires which are true and gratious are unsatisfiable; thus *David* speaks of his desires: *My soul* (saith he) *breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgements at all times*; yea he further describes the ardency and unsatisfiablenesse of his desires by the *Harts panting after the water-brooks*. The Hart is naturally the most thirsty of all creatures, but this thirst is much increased when the poor beast is chased with dogs: even so the true desires of the soul after grace, are earnest, ardent and vehement desires.

2 Cor. 7. 11.

4. You

4. You may know true desires after grace by their Object. Desires they are not gracious, if they be more after outward things then after God. So *David*, *My soul thirsteth after God, after the living God. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth after thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.* Thus his soul longed, *and did break* with longing after Gods judgements.—Now therefore wouldest thou know whether thou hast any beginning of grace in thy soul, examine what thy desires are; perhaps thou canst not pray, but thou desirest to pray: perhaps thou canst not mourn for sin, but dost thou mourn that thou canst not mourn? Perhaps thou dost not believe, (as thou feareſt) but dost thou desire to believe? Perhaps thou canst not repent, but dost thou desire to repent, and dost thou labour to repent? Then thou mayest conclude that thou hast some beginnings of true grace in thy soul.

Psal. 42. 2. Psal. 63. 1. Psa. 119. 20

5. We may know the truth of grace though it be little, by the earnest desire after the Word and the means of grace. —Thus *Peter* sets forth our desires, *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* There is in a child a natural instinct as soon as ever it is born, to desire after the mothers breast: the Apostle makes it a resemblance of a spiritual man; a man spiritually new born, will desire after the Word, the means of grace, that he may grow in grace.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

6. An

1 Joh. 3. 14. 6. An indeared love to those that have grace. *By this you know you are past from death to life, because you love the brethren.* Casuists upon this text, say, that love to Gods children is the first grace, and first appears in young converts. The natives in New *England*, it is observed, upon their conversion, (for God hath begun there to bring some of those poor creatures *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to himself*) the first appearance of grace in them, is in their love and respect to those that are truly gracious. Thus I have shewed you an answer to the question, what are the least measures of grace, without which, or some of them, a man cannot be said to have grace, and whersoever any of these are, that mans condition is safe, and these little measures of grace will bring a man to heaven.

I shall here lay down some cautions to prevent mis-application.

1. Caution. Though these small measures of grace are saving, yet you must not content your selves with them. Take heed, lest what I have said, for the support of the weakness of some Christians, become not a pillow for the idleness of others; *But let us strive to go on unto perfection.* We must not sit down with any measure of grace. And to perswade you hereunto;

Heb. 6. 1.

1. Consider, that things meerly necessary and sufficient to maintain a natural life, will not content a man: what man is content, though

though he hath clothes enough to hide his nakedneſs, and food enough to keep life and ſoul together? —— But he deſires not onely clothes for nakedneſs, but ornament, & not only food for hunger and neceſſity, but delight. Now ſhall men be unbounden after their deſires for outward things, and ſhall they ſit down and ſay they have enough for heavenly things?

2. Conſider, if thou contenteſt thy ſelf with a ſmall meaſure of grace, though thou ſhalt have the fruit of thy grace when thou dieſt, yet thou wilt want the comfort of thy grace whileſt thou liveſt. It is ſtrength of grace that gives aſſurance. Weak grace will bring thy ſoule to heaven, but it is the ſtrength of grace will bring heaven into thy ſoul. *The work of Righteouſneſs ſhall be Peace, and the effect of Righteouſneſs ſhall be quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* A childe of God hath ſeldom peace and comfort from the habit of Righteouſneſs, but from the exerciſe of Righteouſneſs. *He that lacketh theſe things* (ſaith *Peter*) *is blinde, and cannot ſee afar off*, &c. This is not ſpoken of wicked men who have no grace, but of ſuch who have grace: and becauſe they exerciſe it not, do not diſcern the comfortable fruits of grace in their ſoule. A little faith unexerciſed, is as to comfort (as we have ſhewed) as good as no faith. —— They that adde not to the ſtocke of grace, will want the comfort of grace. So that a weak Chriſtian, who is compared by

Peter

Iſa. 32. 17.

2 Per. 1. 9, 10, 11.

Mat. 8. 26. *compared with* Mar. 4. 40.

2 Pet. 1. 9. μυωπάζων.

Peter to a purblinde man: *He cannot see* (because the eye-sight of his faith is weak) *afar off*; he cannot see his name writ in heaven; ——He will want the comfortable evidence of grace in his heart, who contents himself with measures of grace.

2. Caution.

The second caution is, Take not those things to be evidences of the *truth* of grace, which are evidences onely of the *growth* and *strength* of grace. *Weak Converts* do involve themselves in a Labyrinth of misery, in judging themselves by those symptomes, which are evidences only of the *strength* of grace. Thou must not judge thy self whether thou art in the state of grace by this; as whether thou hast ravishing joyes and comforts of the Holy Ghost; these are things that God indulgeth to some few, and those of a long standing in the school of Christ. In a *School*, a scholler must not compare himself with one of the highest Form: if thou wouldest judge of the truth of thy grace, judge by the lowest measure. The reason why hypocrites and low-form Christians do mistake, is this: hypocrites judge they have grace because they have gifts, and weak Christians judge they have no grace because they do not finde such measures of grace in them as are in others. We do not use to say, it is not day because it is not noon. ——It is unthankfulness to God, and uncharitableness to our selves, to argue a nullity of grace from the weakness of it; & therefore if thou canst

canst not say, I see my grace, yet it's well if thou canst say, Blessed be God, I see my sin; If thou canst not say that thou leavest sin, yet it's well if thou canst say, I have a full purpose of heart to do so: if thou canst but cry out for the want of grace, yet comfort thy self, and do not conclude thou hast no grace

3. Caution.

Do not conclude you have small measures of grace, because you have but smal measures of comfort; this is the fault of young converts, they take measure of their grace by their comfort, which is a false and deceitful rule; growth of grace is not to be measured by the working of joy: the sweet blossome of joy may fall off, when the fruit of grace may come on; yea sometimes Christians of the greatest measure of grace, may have the least measure of comfort; and all to let us know, that as the being and exercise, so the comforts of our graces comes from free grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was annointed above his fellows, and was full of grace and truth, yet in the time of his desertion was without comfort, when by reason of the suspension of the favour of God his Father, he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* And so sometimes Christians that have but little measures of grace, may have much comfort; and this is the reason of that flash of joy that young converts have; it is Gods indulgence towards them, to give them great joy at their first conversion: and indeed their joy at that time is the more

more taken notice of, because usually such have much trouble of minde when they pass through the pangs of the new birth, the change is then specifical, which afterwards is but gradual: and so though they have afterwards more grace, more setled joys and comforts, yet at their first conversion they may have more sense of their joyes, though afterwards they may find an increase of grace; when joy may be as real, though not so sensible; and therefore do not judge thy grace by thy comfort.

4. Caution. Do not conclude the measure of thy grace little, because thou hast but a little measure of gifts. Gifts are the issues of time and experience, and the fruits of studies advantaged by the strength of naeural parts. A man may have a quick and pregnant invention, a profound judgement, a retentive memory, a clear elocution, and the like, and yet none of these things can be arguments of grace, but all are but natural endowments. Gifts may be high, and grace may be low: Thus it was with the Church of *Corinth*, they were *inriched with utterance and knowledge*, and they came behind other Churches in no gift; and yet the Apostle speaks of these very *Corinthians*, that they were very low in grace: for so he taxeth them, 1 *Cor.* 3. 1. that *they were not spiritual, but carnal men, Babes in Christ*, that by reason of their *envying, strife and divisions, they were carnal, and walked as men*; thus the Church of *Laodicea* was rich,

1 Cor. 1. 5. & v. 7.

1 Cor. 3. 1, 3

and

and increased in gifts, and grew proud of it too, and yet for grace *was poor, and naked, and blinde, and miserable.* It is with some Professors as it is with a well read Schollar, who having read many books of Geography and the Description of places, can discourse of them very well, but if he were to travel those countries, of which he hath so often read, he would soon be at a loss: — So gifts may carry men far from matter of discourse about Religion, but its only grace that inables a man to practice Religion. A childe of God that hath but a little measure of gifts, may have for all that much grace. Of all the seven Churches of *Asia*, it is said of *Philadelphia*, that *she had but a little strength* that is but little strength of parts and gifts, and yet that Church was very eminent for grace; for she with as much, if not more faithfulness then the other Churches, *did keep the word of Christs patience, and did not deny his name.* Judge not therefore thy grace by thy gifts. It is good to *covet earnestly the best gifts*, but the way of true grace (though but weak) is *a more excellent way.*

Rev. 3, 17.

Rev. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 12, 31

I shall conclude this point with some further consolation to the people of God, that have but weak measures of grace.

Though thou art but weak in thy self, yet thou hast much strength from without thee, or rather it is in thee, because of the Spirit of Christ that dwels in their hearts, that do believe the devil doth all he can to make a little

1. *Comfort.*

Luk. 22 32

little faith faile, —— but Christ prays *that it fail not*. Great are the confederacies of the world, the flesh and the devil against thy little grace, but *be of good comfort. Ye are of God little children* (saith St. *John*) *and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world*: and the weaker thou art, the more advantage hath God *to magnifie the glory* of his power in thy weakneſſe.

1 Joh. 4.4. 2 Cor. 12 9 Iſa. 26.4.

1. Comfort your ſelves ye weak Chriſtians, for you have a ſtrong God. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.* —— *Your God is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſſe before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. He is able through his Almighty power through faith to keep you unto ſalvation.* ——you have a ſtrong God, fear not, his power will be magnified in your weakneſs.

Jude 24. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Heb. 7. 25.

2. You have a ſtrong Saviour, though your grace is weak, yet *he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him.* ——Chriſt is the *a Wiſdom and the power of God to thoſe that are called*; Yea he is called a ſtrong Redeemer. *Our Redeemer is ſtrong, the Lord of hoſts is his name* —— Satan is indeed the Prince of the power of the aire: for ſo he is called, Eph. 2. 2 but Jeſus Chriſt is truly the great power of God, who is able, becauſe *b ſtronger then the ſtrong man arm'd, to bruiſe Satan under the feet of his Saints.*

ὡς τὸ πανταλὲς. i. e. perfectè & perpetuò. —— εἰς τὸ παντελὲς. Non ſolùm perpetuitatem temporis ſignificat, ſed omnimodam perfectionem. Camer. in Myr.

a 1 Cor. 1. 24.

b ἰσχυρότερος.

c Rom. 6. 10.

3. You lie under a ſtrong Word, which is able to carry on the work of grace, which is begun

begun in you. The Word of God, though *it bee foolishnesse to them that perish, yet it is the power of God to them that are saved*; yea it is an Engine, *mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it selfe against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*; wherefore the Apostle prayes, *Now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified*; so that cheer up, though faith be weak, yet the word of God is strong; it is *that ingrafted Word which is able to save your soules*: yea, in a word, *The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproofe, for correction, for instruction in righteousnesse, that the man of God may be made perfect, and throughly furnished unto all good works*.

1 Cor. 1. 18 Rom. 1. 16,

2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. Act. 20. 32

Jam. 1. 21.

2 Tim. 3. 16. 17. αὔταρκος ἐξηρτισμένος

2 Tim. 2. 19.

Singula verba pondus habent, certissimè hæc nititur primò fundamento, secundò non quocunque, sed firmo, tertiò non hominis, sed Dei, quartò non vacillante, sed stante & obsignato. Dr. Prideaux.

4. You are weak, but you stand on a sure foundation. 1. It is a foundation. 2. A sure foundation. 3. It is a foundation of God: And 4. it is the foundation of God that cannot shake, but standeth firm. Now the weak believer stands by the immutable decree of God, which here the Apostle cals the foundation of God.

Zech. 12. 10.

5. Weak believers are assisted by a strong spirit. The spirit of God is not only a *spirit of grace and supplication*, but it is also a *spirit of power*. And therefore let weak believers chear up themselves, though they have but

2 Tim. 1. 7.

In re ſtat & non ſtas. Aug.

little grace, yet that little grace is upheld and maintained by the great power of God unto ſalvation.

2. *Comfort.* Cant. 4. 10.

The truth and eſſence of grace is not diſcern'd ſo much by good acts, as by good affections. ——*How fair is my love, my ſiſter,* ſaith Chriſt to the Spouſe? God reckons of our beauty by our love, and of our perfection by the ſincerity of our affections. Natural abilities, to which formaliſts and hypocrites may come up, may and doe reſemble good actions, but they cannot come up to good affections. A Painter may paint the colour of the face, but his art cannot give heat unto the picture. Good actions may give you the reſemblance of a Chriſtian. So what *Jehu* did reſembled a true Reformer; but they are good affections that doe ſet out the life and heat of true grace. Judge thy grace therefore by thy affections, and take comfort in this, though thou art little and low in actions, if thou art warm and working in thy affections.

3. *And laſt comfort.*

The third and laſt comfort is this, That little grace ſhall be laſting grace. *Adam* had perfection, but had not perſeverance; and thou (poor ſoul!) haſt imperfection of grace, but haſt perſeverance in grace. The moſt violent and impetuous flood of corruption ſhall not quench the leaſt meaſure; the leaſt ſpark of true grace, the moſt boyſterous blaſt of temptation ſhall not extinguiſh this poor ſmoaking flax, not one drop of his divine

ointment shall be spilt as water upon the ground. Comets may blaze a while, and then they fall; to shew that it was a Comet and not a Star.——True Stars doe not, cannot fall. Oh then blesse God, who though in his anger, *he breaks the Nations like a Potters vessel with an iron mace*; yet such is his tenderneſſe over weak believers, *he will not break the bruised reed* and though he put out the candle of the wicked, yet *he will not quench the smoaking flax*. The seeming graces of hypocrites shall perish and come to nothing, when true grace shall hold out. ——The painted face decayes soon, but the naturall complexion lasts. A child of God may be tossed by reason of corruption and temptation in a troublesome sea, but that ship shall never be shipwrackt, whereof Christ is the Pilot, the Scriptures the Compasse, the Promises the Tacklings, Hope the Anchor, Faith the Cable, the holy Ghost the winds, and holy affections the Sailes, which are filled thus with the gales of the Spirit——&c. *Fear not therefore little flock; for it is your fathers pleasure to give you a Kingdome.*

Stella cadens non est stella.

V.

Sermon At Lawrence Jury, London. March 23. 1651.

1. Kings 14. part of the 13. verse.

——Because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel *in the house of* Jeroboam.

HAving finished the former part of the doctrine about little measures of grace; I come now to the second part, which is this, *That God doth exactly take notice, tenderly cherish, and graciously reward the least beginnings, and the smallest measures of grace in the hearts of his people.*

Second part of the doctrine.

In the prosecution of which point, I shall proceed in this method.

1. I shall prove the truth of it.

2. I wil also endeavour to give you the grounds hereof, and then make application.

First, that God doth thus cherish the smal beginnings of grace, wil appear, if we consider, 1. These Scripture-instances, *Mat.* 12, 20. *He wil not queneh the smoking flax*, that is, by the figure *Meiosis*, (as I have shewn already) he wil kindle it.——*He wil not break the bruised reed*, that is, he wil strengthen it.——God regards not the flame only, but the smoking of grace; not the ripe fruit, but the tender buds. Christ would have accepted of green figs of the fig-tree, though the time of ripe fruits

Mat. 12. 10

Cant. 2. 13.

fruits was not yet come; so some expound that place, *Mar.* 11.13. Christ accepts not only the *honey*, but the *honey-comb* too, that is, say Expositors, *not only the excellent services, but even the meaner services of his people*; God takes notice of the cries of our heart, even the desires of the humble, even the most inward groanings of the soule; not a good word but God takes notice of it; nay, God takes not onely notice of the least good that is in his people, but he eyes also the common good that is in such as have no grace; thus when the young man came to Christ, —— though he had no true grace, yet it is said, *Jesus loved him.* And he took notice of that discreet answer of that Scribe mentioned by St. *Marke*, and said unto him, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of heaven.*

Mar. 11.13
Cant. 5.1. *Trap. in loc.*
Exo. 14.15
1 Pet. 3.6.
Mar. 10.21
Mar. 12.34

2. The truth of this point, may be made out by those sweet and gracious promises, God hath made to grace though weak. I wil give you one instead of many, mentioned by the Prophet *Isaiah*, *He shall feed his flock like a Shepheard, he shall gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosome, and gently lead those that are with young.*

Isa 40.11.

3. By counsels that Christ giveth to us, how we our selves should carry our selves to those that are weak, *viz.* to use them with all tenderneſse. —Now if God would have others, then surely himselfe wil deal with weake believers with much tenderneſse.

1. God would have the *strong* to bear with the

Rom 15.1.

Psa.103.6. the *weak*, to bear with *their infirmities*, and not to please *our selves*, and surely then God will bear with them, and forbear them. See *Psal.* 103.

Rom.14.1. 2. We are to receive them into our fellowship.——*Him that is weak in the faith receive you.* And surely God will not reject such out of Communion with himself and Son.

Rom.14. 15.21. 1 Cor.8.12 3. We must do nothing that will or may justly offend or grieve the weak. We must *not walk uncharitably*, and grieve *our brother with our meat.* We must not make him *stumble that is weak.*

Gal.6.1. καταρτίζετε. 4. We should *restore* a weak Brother that is fallen, and put him in joynt again, *with the spirit of meekness: you that are spiritual*, that is, strong Christians, *help up such as are fallen through weakness.*

Isa. 35.3. Heb. 12. 12 13. 5. We must *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, and say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong.* We must *help to lift up hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather that it be healed.* We must not be like the Herd of Deere, who push away from them the poor wounded Deere, but we must endeavour the *healing of the wounded*, and *comfort the feeble-minded*, and *support the weak*, *be patient towards all men*: Support the weak, *i.e.* Set your shoulder to bear them up, who will stand, but are weak. ——Hold them up as a Crutch doth a body that

1 Thes. 5. 14. Ἀντέχεσθε, *sublevet infirmos aliquis vultures* Beza.

that is lame: help to stand, who is for weaknesse like to fall.——Let your charity helpe to hold them up, even as a beame holds up a house that is ready to fall. Now if God enjoynes us to have all this care of those that are weak in grace, to cherish, support and comfort them, then surely the God of Mercy and Compassion, will be very careful to cherish the smallest measures of grace in the weakest Believers.

ἀντέχεσθαι propriè nitentem, & conantem, sed non sufficientem, nec sat virium habentem adjuvare. C.A. Lap.

Why doth God cherish the least measures of grace in his people? 2 *Quest.*

Because the least measure of grace is of a very great value; the least grace and least measure or degreee of it, is the purchase of Christs blood, and the merit of his great sufferings. The smallest spark of a diamond is precious; pearles and precious stones are but little for quantity, but great for quality and esteem. The least degree of grace is the Work of God, and God will not forsake his own Work.—— *Answ.* 1.

Little grace is of the same manner and excellency with the greatest degree of grace; for as the very filings of gold are of the same nature with gold, so the least measure of of grace is grace.——The faith of all believers is the same faith specifically, though not the same gradually, their *faith is in all alike precious*, but not alike strong. 2. *Answ.* 1 Pet. 1. 1.

Because God is the Author of weak grace as well as of strong.——*Solomon* gives a good rule why the rich should not sleight the 3. *Answ.*

Prov. 22. 2. poor. *Because God is the Author and maker of them both.* And God will not sleight the poor in spirit, no more then those that are rich in grace; *for he is the maker of them both.* It is an argument to us why we should not despise the poor, *because God made him*; and therefore surely much more because the Lord made the poor and weak Christian, *he will not despise, &c.*——

Job 31. 13. *Job* saith, *He did not despise the cause of his man servant or maid servant*, and he gives a

Vers. 15. reason for it, *vers.* 15. *Did not he that made me in the womb, make him, and did not he fashion us in the womb?* which holds as a very firm argument why the rich should not despise the poor, and so why the rich in grace should not despise those that are poore in grace; for God made and fashioned them both. Now what is a reason unto us, God is also pleased to make a reason unto himself, *That he will not forsake what he hath formed*; for so the Prophet *Isaiah*, *The Lord that created thee O* Jacob, *and he that formed thee O* Is-

Isa. 43. 1. rael, *fear not*; *for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name*; *for thou art mine.* And again, *Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb: Fear not O* Jacob *my servant, and thou* Jesurun *whom I have chosen*; yea though he be the *worme Jacob*, yet

Isa. 44. 1. God that made him will not crush him, but cherish him. See a gracious promise made to those that have but little grace, upon this very ground, that God is the Author of that

little

little grace. *Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified. A little one shal become a thousand, and a smal one a strong Nation; I the Lord will hasten it in his time.* Isa. 66. 21, 22.

The Lord will perfect his work that concerneth his People, i.e. He will perfect and encourage the least beginnings of grace, because *Grace is his work in his servants.* It is a very good argument in Prayer, *O Lord, forsake not the work of thy hands.* And though in respect of outward things God may destroy *him whom his hands have made and fashioned*, but it is otherwise in respect of grace. God will not destroy any measure of grace which is the work of his hands. Property is the ground of love, care and tenderness: as a man will look to a weak childe, because it is his childe, and will repair a weak house, because it is the house wherein he dwells. And that is the third demonstration of Gods tender care over his people, that the meanest measure of grace shall not be deserted or forsaken, because God is the Author of it. Psal. 138. 8. Job 10. 8.

A fourth reason may be drawn from the Covenant of grace, the nature and tenor whereof, is to accept of sincerity in stead of perfection, desires for deeds, purposes for performances, pence for pounds, and mites for millions; and therefore God will accept and reward the least measure of grace, that is, in truth and sincerity. God requires of

Abraham

Gen. 17. 1. & 24. 1. תמים *De victimis perfectis & immaculatis dicitur.*

Abraham, when he renewed with him the Covenant of grace; *Be thou perfect*, (i.e. upright) *and walk so before me, and I will be thy exceeding great reward.*

Use. To make some Application of this truth. We may from hence deduce these inferences following: If God doth cherish and will reward the smallest measures of grace;

1. *Inference.* Then it will follow, *That God takes notice of the smallest sins to punish them.* He that graciously eyes the very buddings of grace, will also justly eye the buddings of corruption in his own people. That he was ready *to have slain* Moses for *his neglecting of circumcising his son*; and thus the Lord made a breach upon *Uzzah*, when he put forth his hand and stayed the shaking of the Ark: *You have I known* (saith God of his people,) *only of all the Families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*

Exod. 4. 24

2 Sam. 6. 7

Amos 3. 2.

It is true, it is said, *The Lord beholds not iniquity in* Jacob, *neither sees perverseness in* Israel, ——but this is not, as the *Antinomians* glosse upon it, as if God did not see sin in his people, and is never displeased with their sins: But the meaning is, that God sees not sin in his people, so as eternally to punish it. ——And moreover, the most proper sense of that place is this, That whereas *Balak* hired *Balaam* to curse the People of *Israel*, and that false Prophet for the wages of unrighteousnesse was ready enough to have taken

Numb. 23. 21.

all

all occasions of cursing them, yet he could not fasten any curse upon them at that time, because there was no provoking sin amongst them; and therefore he gave *Balak* counsel to tempt them to sin, and so by the stumbling-block of the *Midianitish* women, he drew *Israel* to idolatry and adultery, and so made them fall. But God doth see sin in his own people, yea the least sin, yea he eyes their failings, though not to damne them for them, yet to chastise them for them. God sees the purposes of sin, as well as the purposes of grace. It is said of *Balak*, that he arose and warred against *Israel*. Now we doe not read that ever *Balak* did actually wage warre against *Israel*, onely he did intend and purpose it, and for that end *sent and called* Balaam *the son of* Beor *to curse them*, and yet the Holy Ghost reckons upon his wicked purpose as if he had accomplish't it.

Vid. Gataker in loc.

Josh. 24.9.

Learn from hence, That the same minde should be in Christians of greater growth to the weak, as was in Christ Jesus; who though he be higher then the highest, yet he looks upon the poor and lowly without disdain, and so should we. *The heaven is the throne, and the earth is the footstoole of the Lord*, and yet this great God will not despise the weakest Saint, but *will look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his word.* He will look on the poor, weak, trembling soule, and shall we look off from such with

2. *Inference.*

Isa. 66.1,2.

with pride and disdain, and set such at our footstoole? shall Christ give the Lambe in his Scutchion, and wilt thou give the Lion? shall he like a Lambe be meek and gentle, and thou like the Lion be stout, haughty and stately, that contemns all the beasts of the Forrest? Oh be not you supercilious and contemptuous towards weak Christians, who are injured and discouraged by strong Christians.

1. When they are put upon such austerities of Religion, as are far beyond their strength and growth. When these poor, torn tottered and rent bottles are put upon to hold new wine, alas poor souls, they are discouraged; wherefore Christ proportions his doctrine to their capacities, and will not say that to them which they cannot at present hear, and so proportions out their duties to their abilities, and will not outmatch their strength with his commands. Fasting and suffering was a hard duty, and therfore he will excuse them till they have had more time and more experience in the wayes of God, till the Holy Ghost come down upon them, and they have more grace; which is a good rule for us, not to discourage young beginners in the schoole of Christ, not to put them to read such Authors as are above their capacities.

Mat. 9. 16, 17.

2. When strong Christians are too sharp and rigorous in bitter reproofs, for the failings and infirmities of weak Christians.

Young

Young converts like young twigges must be gently handled, else you will break them; you must excuse their failings, hide their wants, commend their performances, cherish their forwardnesse, resolve their doubts, bear their burdens, and by this gentlenesse bring them into a love of Religion, that they may not distaste it as soon as they know it.

3. By setting light by their gifts. Alas, how soon is the smoaking flax quenched, by the too much supercilliousnesse of those that think themselves bright torches? how easily is the poor spark of grace trod out by the *foot of pride?*

4. By puzling them with doubtful disputes, contrary to that of the Apostle, *Him that is weake, in the faith receive, but not unto doubtfull disputations.* Rom. 14 1.

5. By giving them ill example. Weak Christians are more apt to be led by example then by Precept: When *Peter, who was a Pillar in the Church, and a strong Christian, for fear of Persecution forsook the Gentiles, and separated and withdrew himselfe, then others of the Jewes, (which in all likelihood were weak Christians) dissembled also.* Thus *Paul* argues to abstain from giving ill example, about the eating the *Idolothyta*; *If any man see thee which hast knowledge*, i.e. *who art a strong Christian, sit at meat in the Idols Temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak, be imboldened to eat those things that are offered to idols?* Gal. 2. 12, 13.

And therefore let Christians learn from God,

God, to cherish the weak beginnings of grace in the people of God. *Look not on me*, saith the Church, *because I am black, because the Sun hath looked upon me*, i.e. look not on me with a lofty and disdainful look, and with a coy countenance; and then the Church addes, *My mothers children were angry with me*, that is, other Congregations and People did disesteem and disdain me for my infirmity. —But this should not be among Christians, but the strong should cherish the weak. Angels despise not the poorest Christians, but do minister unto them.

Heb. 1. ult.

3. *Inference.* Learn from hence, how God doth by leasure and degrees, carry on in the hearts of his people the work of grace unto further perfection. Mushromes and such like worthlesse things, like *Jonas* his gourd may spring up in one night; but things of most moment, are of longest growth before they come to perfection. The Elephant amongst the Beasts, and the Oake amongst the Trees, and Man amongst the rational creatures, are longest before they grow up to their full and perfect dimensions. And as it is in nature, so it is in grace; there is a progresse from lesse to greater: all this work is by degrees. The godly are called *Trees of Righteousnesse*, and yet this is by degrees. There is first the budding forth of the earth, and then those things that are sown spring forth, &c. v. 11. And therefore let young Converts learne from hence not to be discouraged. Gods

Isa. 61. 3.

Vers. 11.

works

works both of nature and grace are perfected by degrees.

1. Though God regards the least measures of grace, let not this make you regardlesse to grow in grace. In the first creation God said to the creatures, *Increase and multiply*, and by vertue of that word the earth brings forth to this day. Now it is so in the new and second Creation; the Lord expects that our grace should increase and multiply.

2. Though you have but a little grace, yet do not despise it, or disparage it.——*Oh, do not despise the day of small things in the soul. Do not tread upon the bunch of grapes, upon the new wine in the cluster, but say, there is a blessing in it.* Do not despise a little grain of mustard-seed, it will grow to a tree; true grace is a spark of heaven, do not tread it out; despise not the least, and be not satisfied with the greatest measure of grace.

1. Let this comfort thy poor soul (Oh weak Christian!) whose burden it is, that thou hast much corruption and but little grace. God will look over a great deale of sin, and will take notice of the least grace. God will not in refining his gold and silver lose one dram of grace, though it lie among a heap of rubbish. Christ is said, *to have his Fan in his hand, he will throughly purge his floore, and gather his wheat into his garner.* Now the use of a Fan is to cast out the worst and keep in the best, to drive away the chaffe and save the wheat: so Christ, though he purge out

2. *Use of Caution.*

2. *Caution.*

Zech. 4. 6.

3. *Use of Comfort.*

Mat. 3. 12.

out the chaffe of corruption, yet he will save and preserve every grain of grace. It is otherwise with the devils Sieve. Christ tells Luk. 22.31 *Peter, that Satan desired to sift him.* Now the use of the Sieve is contrary to the Fan, for that keeps the waste and lets out the best. The devil doth all he can to destroy our grace, and to increase our sin. But 'tis otherwise, God will kill thy corruptions and cherish thy graces, and if the least grace be in the soul, though with a mixture of much corruption, God will not despise it.

2. *Comfort.* God carries the most tender regard to those that are weak in grace; the weak child Isa. 40.11. is still carried in our armes, and the weakest of the flock the good shepherd will carry in his bosome. Christ gave *Peter* charge in the Joh. 21.15 first place *to feed his Lambs.*

1. Gods care over weak Christians is such that *he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with the temptation will make a way to escape, that they shall be able to bear it.* God doth consider we are but dust; and the wise Physician of our soules will mercifully weigh every grain of every dose, and will not outmatch their strength whose strength is small.

2. God will not put them on difficult duties at the first.—Christ taught his disciples such doctrines as their weakness could bear.

3. God will bear with their infirmities; he Hos. 11.1,3 teacheth his children to go, and holds them up by the armes.

2 Tim.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

VI. Sermon At *Lawrence Jury, London.* March 30. 1651.

HAving lately handled the Doctrine of the small beginnings, and the least measures of true grace, and shewn you how God will accept and reward them, by opening to you that passage in 1 *Kings* 14. 13. ——*Concerning* Jeroboam's *sonne, in whom there was found some good.*——And lest that doctrine should accidentally (through the corruption of our deceitfull hearts) beget in us spiritual sloth, and satisfaction in weak degrees of grace; therefore I shall prosecute my discourse concerning the degrees of grace, and shew you, that though God regards weak grace, yet we must all labour to obey this Apostolical injunction, *to be strong in the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus.*

In the whole verse you have three parts.

1. A loving Compellation, *My son.*

2. A pressing exhortation, *Be strong in grace.*

3. The reason of it, in the illative, *Therefore.*

1. For the Compellation. *Quare*, How *Timothy* could be *Pauls* son, for *his father was a Greek*, but *Paul was a Jew of the Tribe of* Benjamin? *Timothy* then was not *Pauls* son *in the flesh, but in the faith.* Now,

Act. 16. 2. Phil. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 2.

A further queſtion is, *Why is he called* Paul's *Son?*

Baldwin gives this reaſon, *Becauſe* (ſayes he) Paul *begat him to the faith*, alledging that in 1 *Cor.*4.17. compared with *verſ.* 14. where *Paul* calls the *Corinthians*, whom he had converted to the faith, *his beloved ſonnes*, verſ. 14. and ſo he calls *Timothy*, verſ. 17. But *Timothy* was not *Pauls* ſon in that ſenſe: for as *Eſtius* ſhewes, he was converted long before *Paul* knew him, by the godly inſtructions of his *Grandmother Lois*, and his *Mother Eunice*.

2 Cor.4.17 compared with Verſ. 14.

2 Tim.1.5. 2 Tim.3. 15.

The true reaſons, why *Paul* called *Timothy* his ſon, were

1. Becauſe *Paul* was aged, and *Timothy* young, and it was uſual for the old to call the younger ſonnes.

2. Becauſe he confirmed him in the faith.

3. Becauſe he loved him as a ſonne, and *Timothy* loved *Paul* as a father.

Phil.2.23.

4. Becauſe as a ſonne with the father he ſerved *Paul* in the Goſpel.

Before I come to the main doctrines, let me obſerve ſomething in the paſſage to it; upon theſe reaſons *Paul* calls *Timothy* his ſon: From the compellation, *My ſon*, Obſerve

1. *Obſervation.*

1. That Miniſters ſhould uſe loving inſinuations towards their hearers, to uſher in uſeful inſtructions.

Soft words turn away wrath, and hard flints are broken upon ſoft pillows. This was *Pauls* practice here and elſewhere; he gained their affections, the better to reform their judgements.

2. And

2. And then in that he calls him *My Son*, in relation to himself as a father, Observe

2. *Observation.*

That religion puts men into the neereſt union and the moſt indeared relations. They who are glued together in the bloud of Chriſt, are knit together in the ſtrongeſt bonds.

Now from the reaſon of the duty, *Therefore my ſon, &c.* Expoſitors do vary what this illative particle hath a reference to: Some make it to refer to v. 7. of the foregoing chapter, and ſo *Eſtius*, *God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a ſound minde*; and if ſo,

Sanguine Chriſti conglutinati. Salvian.

Then obſerve,——That the receiving the firſt degrees of grace, ſhould be a ſwaying reaſon to move us to grow in grace.

3. *Obſervation.*

Others refer it to *Pauls* example, *v.* 8. or to the example of *Oneſiphorus*, *v.* 16. from whence may be obſerved,

That the good example of good men, ſhould be an argument to us to increaſe in goodneſſe.

4. *Obſerv.*

If it referre to the 15. verſe. *This thou knoweſt that all they which are in* Aſia *be turned away from me, of whom are* Phygellus *and* Hermogenes; and thus *Theodoret* refers it: Then obſerve

5. *Obſerv.*

That other mens Apoſtacy from the Profeſſion of grace, ſhould make the godly more careful to grow ſtrong in grace. But I ſhall handle the text without any relative conſideration.

Explication of the text: Rom. 1.5.

Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.] *Timothy* may be considered in a double capacity, either as a Minister, or as a private Christian; *If as a Minister*, then the force of the exhortation lies in this: that he should increase in ministerial *gifts and graces*; whence may be observed,

Eph. 3.8.

6. Observ. That Ministers of all men should grow in the truth, and in Ministerial gifts; because as they grow, so will the people grow under their Ministry. Ministers do receive grace and Apostleship for obedience to the faith among all Nations, *Rom.* 1.5.

And grace is given unto them, that they may preach unto others the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. 3.8.

7. Observ. 2. If he be considered as a private Christian, then he is exhorted not to content himself with grace received, but to *labour after more strength of grace.*——

Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.] Grace may be said to be in Christ two waies: either

1. As the subject recipient of grace, or

2. As a fountain redundant and overflowing to his people.

Joh. 1.16. Grace is in Christ *in all fulnesse*, from whence his people receive *grace for grace.*

There are two observations which I shall note from the words, considering the exhortation, without reference to what went before, or follows after.

Doct. 1. *That believers are not to rest satisfied in weak measures*

measures of grace already received, but to endeavour to attain greater strength of grace.

That Christ is the subject in which all grace is, and the fountain from which believers must receive all their grace. Doct. 2.

In the opening of the first doctrine, the first thing is to make it appeare, *That believers must not rest satisfied with weak measures of grace received, but must labour after more grace.* And this I shall prove

1. By instances of two sorts. 1. That believers have grown from weak grace to strong grace, *who out of weakneſſe were made strong.* Heb. 11. 34. There are expositors who refer this place to *Hezekiahs* recovery, 1 *Kin.* 20. ——but it may have a more general extent and application. The Psalmist speaking of Gods people (saies he) *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appears before God.* Psal. 84. 7. It is true, the proper reference of these words is to the Jewes going up to *Jerusalem* to worship, when the males went thrice a yeere up to *Jerusalem* to worship, according to the law, *Exod* 23. 14, 17. yet *Ainsworth* understands it of our growth in grace; so we are said to be *changed from glory to glory*, that is, from little degrees of grace to greater; *grace* is but *glory begun*, and *glory* is but *grace perfected*; true grace is still aspiring unto perfection, and therefore saies *Paul*, *if by any means I might attain the Resurrection of the dead*, his meaning is, that I may attain that perfection of holinesse which accompanies the state of the Re- 2 Cor. 3. 18 Phil. 3 11.

ſurrection: a Metonymie of the ſubject for the adjunct; he is ſtill preſſing forward that he might attain further degrees of grace, and for that end *Paul*, he *forgat what was behind, and reached forth to thoſe things that were before*, ver. 13. And though *Paul*, Eph. 3. 4. had very great knowledge in the myſterie of Chriſt, yet he ſtil deſired to know more and more of Chriſt.

Eph. 3. 16. 2. By inſtances, wherein Gods people have prayed for the ſtrength of grace. *I bow my knees* (ſayes *Paul*) *unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he would grant unto you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthned with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*

Rom. 15. 13, 14. And ſpeaking of the *Romans*, Rom. 15. 13, 14. he ſayes, *I am perſwaded you are full of goodneſſe and knowledge*; yet becauſe the beſt and moſt learned *know but in part, and ſee but darklie through a glaſſe*, 1 Cor. 13 12. he prays that God would *fill them with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghoſt.* So he prayes, *that their love might abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgement; and that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpirituall underſtanding, that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, and be fruitfull in every good work, increaſing in the knowledge of God.* Thus Gods people have prayed for a further increaſe in grace. *Paul* after his converſion increaſed more in ſtrength, whereby he was enabled

Phil. 1. 9.

Col. 1. 9, 10

to

to confound the oppoſing Jewes at *Damaſcus*, Acts 9.22.

2. By Commands. Leaving the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, we muſt *goe on to perfection*; we muſt *give diligence to adde grace to grace*; ſo we are commanded *to be ſtrong in the Lord, to ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit your ſelves like men, and be ſtrong, and to abound more and more*. Many ſuch commands are ſcattered up and down the Scripture, which ſhews our duty *to grow more and more*, and to attain unto greater meaſures of grace.

2. *Proofe.* Heb. 6. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 5. Eph. 6. 10. 1 Cor. 16. 13. 1 Theſ. 4. 1 1 Cor. 15. ult.

3. By promiſes, that Gods people ſhall do ſo. *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*, that is, they ſhall increaſe more and more in ſtrength. Gods gentleneſſe makes his people great, and inlargeth their ſteps under them. The feeble among them at that day ſhall be as *David*, *and the houſe of David ſhall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them*. *Parus* in his ſhort notes which he cals his *Adverſaria*, ſaith, *He that is weak in faith, ſhall be as David, ſtrong in faith.*

Pro. 4 18. Pſal. 18. 35, 36. 2 Sam. 18. 3.

Evit hic fortis fide & ſpiritu qualis David prædicatur. Par. Adverſar.

Why ſhould believers not reſt ſatisfied with the firſt beginnings of grace, but labour to be grown and ſtrong Chriſtians?

2. *Queſt.*

The reaſons may be drawn, 1. Partly from the neceſſity of it, *Why you muſt doe it*. And 2. From the danger, *If you doe it not*.

Anſw.

1. From the neceſſity of it, there are theſe reaſons:

1. If you conſider the ſtrong temptations

Reaſon 1.

you are like to meet withall from the divel. We are therefore commanded to *be ſtrong in the Lord; to put on the whole Armour of God, that we might be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil. For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, and againſt the Rulers of the darkneſſe of this world.* Now ſhall the divel be ſtrong and armed, and ſhal we be content to be unarmed and weak Chriſtians? it is worth your noting in the Epiſtle of *John*, (ſaies he) *I write unto you yong men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* But when he writes to children, he ſayes, *I write to you, becauſe your ſins are forgiven for his names ſake*; intimating that though weak grace be ſufficient to evidence to us the pardon of ſin, yet it is ſtrong grace which is able to overcome the temptations of the devil. The devil ſhall not overcome the weakeſt meaſure of grace, but the ſtronger our grace is, the more able we are to reſt and overcome that enemy of our ſalvation. The divel is called *a roaring lyon, whom we muſt reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith*; it is not weak faith which is able to grapple with the devil, therefore ought we to be grown and ſtrong Chriſtians.

Eph. 6. 10, 11. 12.

1 Joh. 2. 14. Verſ. 12.

1 Pet. 5. 8, 9

2. *Reaſon.*

2. If we conſider the ſtrong oppoſition we are like to meet with from the world; we may be put upon it as *Paul, to fight with beaſts*; ſuch manner of unreaſonable men we may meet withall, and therefore we are commanded

1 Cor. 15. 32.

ded *to watch, and to ſtand faſt in the faith, to quit our ſelves like men, and be ſtrong*; and the reaſon is given, *v.9.* There are many Adverſaries we are like to meet with; and therefore we had need to pray with the *Pſalmiſt, to be ſtrengthned and ſaved by the right hand of the Lord.* Weak faith, it is not fit to be in a crowd of oppoſition; and therefore we ſhould labour *to grow ſtrong in the grace of God.*

Ch.16.13.

Pſal.138.3, 7.

3. We have many ſtrong corruptions in our hearts, which weak grace wil never be able to mortifie; ſtrong paſſions, ſtrong luſts, and how ſhall weak grace be able to grapple with, and have a conqueſt over theſe? If thy graces are weak when thy corruptions are ſtrong, thou wilt be miſerably foiled by thy corruptions; therefore pray for ſtrengthning and aſſiſting grace, whereby thou mayſt be able not only to *reſiſt*, but to *ſubdue* and *mortifie* the ſtrongeſt luſts and paſſions in thy heart.

3. Reaſon.

Another ground of the doctrine is taken from the danger, *if you grow not ſtrong in grace.* As

1. Others that made profeſſion of Religion after you, in time wil goe before you in meaſures and degrees of grace: ſo it is ſaid, *That many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt.* Thoſe who were firſt in the profeſsion of the Goſpel ſhall be laſt in the degrees and meaſures of grace, becauſe they have not improved grace to a further increaſe of it.

Mat.19. 30. compared with Mar.10.12, 16.

2. If

Non progredi, eſt regredi.

2. If thou doſt not grow ſtrong in grace thou wilt be ſure to decay, and to grow weaker: for not to go forward in grace, is to go backward. Grace may be loſt in ſome degree, and to its exerciſe and comfort, though not to its being, and therefore ſayes the Apoſtle, 2 Pet. 1. 8. Rev. 3. 2. *If theſe things be in you and abound, they make you that ye ſhall neither be barren, nor unfruitfull.* Intimating, that you will be barren if you doe not adde grace to grace. Weake things, if they be not watched over, and ſtrengthned, will be ready to die.

3

3. Though thou canſt not loſe the being of thy grace, yet thou wilt loſe the comfort of it, and thou mayeſt be in as much trouble and perplexity as if thou hadſt no grace at all. Its true, weak grace will bring thy ſoul to heaven, but its onely ſtrong grace which will bring heaven into thy ſoule. Little grace is like a little mote, which is not ſeen becauſe it is little. Little grace is as it were no grace, as that man in the Goſpel, he cals his faith unbeliefe; Mar. 9. 24. *Lord* (ſayes he) *help my unbeliefe.* Weakneſſe of grace makes mens perſwaſions of Gods love to be preſumption, their zeale to be lukewarmneſſe, their grace to be but gifts, and (as here) their faith to be but unbeliefe. It is ſtrong grace which gives gladneſſe of heart, and hope in God; therefore ſaies Lam. 3. 18. *Jeremy, My ſtrength, and my hope is periſhed from the Lord.* When ſtrength in grace decayes, there hope & comfort decayes alſo. It is the Apoſtles prayer in the Inſcription

of

of many of his Epistles, *that grace and peace may be multiplied*: If therefore you doe not increase your graces, you wil neither increase nor keep your comforts. *He that lacketh these things is blind* (sayes the Apostle Peter) *and he cannot see afar off*; it is not meant of a total lack of grace, (as hath been shewn) for as after is expressed, he is purged from his old sins, though he forgets it, having lost the sense of pardon for want of adding grace to grace. — 2 Pet. 1. 9.

4. Weak grace under great trials wil expose a man to doubts and falls, as if he had no grace at all; little grace wil keep a man in small trials, but not in greater. Little grace, as to the strait a man may be in, may be as good as no grace; and therefore when the disciples were at sea, and *a great tempest arose, in so much that they were afraid*; that which in *Matthew* is said to be *little*, in *Mark* is said to be *no faith*. Intimating, that as to that particular exigency and strait they were in, their little faith did stand them in no more stead, then if they had had no faith at all. So *Peter*, Christ cals him ὀλιγόπιστον: Because though he began to *walk upon the waves*, but *When the wind grew boysterous, he was afraid, & began to sink. Peter* did not sink into the sea, before his faith began to sink in his soul. He that faints in the day of adversity, it argues his strength is small, so saith *Solomon*. Mat. 8. 26. compared with Mar. 4. 40. Mat. 14. 31. Ver. 29. Pro. 24. 10.

I should now proceed to a second particular, and that is to give some Scripture-notes *Use.*

of

of that man who is grown in grace; —— but let me ſhut up this Sermon, with a ſharp and juſt reproofe of many profeſſors in our time, who go from one ordinance to another, and yet make little progreſſe or increaſe in Religion. They may be fitly compared to a company of Ants, who are very buſie about a mole-hill, and run to and fro, but never grow great: Even ſo we have many Chriſtians, they run from one Church to another, from one Preacher to another, and it may be from one opinion to another, but never grow up in the true grace, and in the true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. —But I ſhall meet with ſuch people hereafter in this diſcourſe.——

VIII. Sermon at Lawrence Jury London. March 30. 1651.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

——*My ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Doct.

HAving in the former Chapter obſerved from this Apoſtolicall injunction to *Timothy*, wch is obligatory to all Chriſtians:

That it is the duty of all believers not to reſt ſatisfied in weak meaſures of grace which they have received, but they are to endeavour to attain unto greater ſtrength of grace. ——

This point we have proved both by Scripture-inſtances, as alſo by ſeverall reaſons.

Now

Now I proceed to answer this question, *viz.*

What are the notes the Scripture layes down of strong and grown Christians? Quest.

We are to know there are marks in Scripture, both of the truth of grace, as also of the strength of grace, and these must not be confounded but distinctly considered. Our present question is about marks of growth in grace.

1. Such as are grown in grace, do ordinarily enjoy a grounded assurance, and comfortable manifestation of the love of God in Christ to their soule. So St. *John* saith, *Perfect love casteth out fear*; The more perfect love is, the lesse of tormenting fear is in the soul, and the reason of our fear and doubting is for want of love. We cannot comprehend the great love of God in Christ to our souls, till *we are strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inder man*; which you will see in the Apostles Prayer for the *Ephesians*, *that God would grant unto them according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit: that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be rooted and grounded in love: and that they might be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, &c.* So that the more strength of grace is in the soul, the clearer is our comprehension of Christs love to the soul. 1 *Answ.* 1 Joh. 4. 18 *Non ita pellitur timor quin animas nostros sollicitet, sed ita pellitur ut non turbet, neque impediat pacem nostram.* Calvin. Eph. 3. 16, 17, 18.

2. Strong and grown Christians are able 2 *Answ.*

expe-

2 Cor. 1. 4. experimentally to *comfort others with the same comfort, wherewith they themselves are comforted of God*; and when they are *converted they are able to strengthen their brethren*, as Christ speaks to *Peter*. By *Conversion* in that place, is not meant the first work of grace wrought in the soul; for that was wrought in *Peter* before his fall, but the meaning is, *Peter*, when thou art *strengthened* and *recovered* from thy fall, when thou hast *recovered strength* again, then see that thou be careful to *strengthen* others, who perhaps may fall into the same *weakness* with thy self.——*If any man be overtaken with a fault*, (saith *Paul* to the *Galatians*) *you that are spiritual restore such a man in the spirit of meekness*. You that are *spirituall*, i.e. you that are grown and experienced Christians, see that you do indeavour to recover such a fallen brother. *Paul* prayes for the *Philippians, that their love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgment*; that is, that they might have knowledge with judgment and experience, so as they might use their judicious knowledge in love for the edification of others, that were but weak in grace: and in the Epistle to the *Romans*, the same Apostle layes down this Character of a strong Christian,——*I am perswaded of you my Brethren, that you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another*: from whence we may gather the Character mentioned, that the more perfect any Christian is in knowledge, or any other

Luke 22. 33. expounded.

Gal. 6. 1. expounded.

Phil. 1. 9. expounded.

Rom. 15. 14.

grace

grace, the more able he is to *admonish* others for their edification.

Grown Christians are such as understand the great and profound mysteries of Religion; they are not only such as use *milk*, and understand only the first and plain Principles, such as the Apostle calls *Babes and unskilful in the Word of Righteousnesse*:——but they are such as are able to digest strong meat, *i.e.* the deep mysteries of the Gospel, they doe in some measure understand, and have their *senses exercised to discern both good and evil*, that is, to judge between true doctrines and false. Strong and grown Christians have such an *eare, as is able to try words*, (as it is in *Job*) *even as the mouth tryeth meats*. ——It is an observation of the learned *Mercer*, that the same word in Hebrew which signifies an *Eare*, in the duall number signifies a *pair of ballances*,——to note thus much, that an experienced and judicious Christian will weigh whatsoever he heareth, before he believeth it. For as the tongue of the ballance standeth as a Judge between the two scales, so should the heart of every man weigh what he hears, and so will every grown and judicious Christian. He will not take up truth upon trust, but he considereth first, and believeth afterwards.——Nor will a grown Christian take up with inferiour knowledge but will like a grown Scholler, be searching after the deep things of God.

3. *Answ.*

Heb. 5. 13.

Vers. 14.

Job 34. 3.

Job 12. 11.

אזן ים
מאזן ים

Aurium & stateræ idem est nomen in Hebræo, duæ enim auros sunt quasi bilances quibus expenduntur quæ audimus. Mercer.

οὖς & νοῦς, *ut os cibum, sic mens verba.* Chrysost.

A grown, experienced and strong Christian,

4. *Answ.*

ſtian, is moſt converſant and imployed in the moſt ſtrict and ſevere exerciſes of Religion which tend moſt to mortification: weak Chriſtians are all for eaſie and ordinary exerciſes, as hearing and reading good books; but a ſtrong Chriſtian is much in ſpirituall watchfulneſſe, ſecret prayer, frequent faſting, ſelf-denyal, and heavenly meditation, and ſuch like duties as have a ſpecial influence upon the mortification of ſin and corruption. A childe whoſe parts and ſtrength is weak, is not converſant about ſuch arduous and great undertakings as a grown man.

Luk. 5.33, 34,35, &c. 5. *Anſw.*

He can believe the accompliſhment of Promiſes and Scripture Propheſies, though Gods Providence ſeeme to make againſt them, and though there ſeem no outward probabilities for them. Thus it argued *Abraham* was ſtrong in faith, who *againſt hope believed in hope; and being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead.*——There were ſeverall things might have ſtaggered *Abrahams* faith, had it not been very ſtrong.

Rom. 4.18, 19.20. *expounded.*

1. There were fifteen years at leaſt between the making of the promiſe of giving him a ſon, and the fulfilling of it.

Compare Gen. 15.4. with Gen. 16.16. & with Gen. 21.5.

2. *Abraham* was about an hundred yeares old before he had a ſon, and ſo unlikely to have children.

3. *Sarah's* womb dead, and no ordinary hope of Procreation.

4. And after the promiſed ſonne was born, God calls upon *Abraham* to offer him up, and

and yet notwithstanding all this, *he staggered not at the promise of God through unbeliefe, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and was fully perswaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to performe.* Rom 4.20, 21.

A strong believer can suffer as well as do for the sake of Christ. Greater strength of grace is required to suffer for the truth, then to professe the truth; and therefore our Saviour propounds this to the ambitious suitors, the sons of *Zebedee*; *Are yee able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of? and to be baptized with the Baptism wherewith I am baptized withall?* implying thus much, that they did not well understand their own strength, that there was more grace required to suffer for the name of Christ, then to believe on the name of Christ, and accordingly as is our strength of grace, so is our courage for the cause of Christ, lesse or more. *Nicodemus* when he had but little grace, he came to Jesus, *but yet in the night*, by stealth; he durst not openly appear for Christ, but afterwards as he grew in grace and knowledge of Christ, so he grew in courage for Christ, And when the cause of Christ was debated in the assembly of the chief Priests and Pharisees, there *Nicodemus* boldly pleads the cause of Christ.——*Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?* Nay we reade afterward of a higher resolution of this once fearful *Nicodemus*, when Christ was crucified and at the lowest.—— 6. *Answ.* Mar. 20. 22, 23. John 3. 2. John 7. 50.

Joh. 19. 39, Ver. 38.-- We finde that *Nicodemus*, *which* (saith the text) *came at first to Jesus by night*, *brought a hundred pound weight of mixture of Myrrhe and Aloes for the Burial of Christ.* The like instance we have in *Ioseph* of *Arimathea*, who was a disciple of Christ, but secretly for fear of the Jews.——But afterwards, when he had got more strength of grace, the Scripture tells us, Mar. 15. 43 *He went in to* Pilate *boldly*, *and craved the body of Iesus.* To professe Christ boldly, in a time when dangers and difficulties attend that Profession, argues a strong faith; a weakly Constitution dare not go out, unlesse the weather be faire; But a strong body can indure the hardest weather. A weak and young Convert is fitter to live in the prosperity of the Gospel; but an old experienced Christian like an old tried souldier, will not shrink in the hardest trials.——*If* Prov. 24. 10. *thou faint in the day of adversity*; it is because *thy strength is small.*

7. *Answ.* He is one that is able to govern his tongue, that though passion be in the heart, yet through the strength of his grace he bridles it in, and restraines it, so as it shall not break into open railings, revilings and clamours as others do. St. *James* gives this character Jam. 3. 2. of a strong Christian; *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*; not legally but Evangelically; He is a perfect man. i. e. He is grown strong in the grace of God.

8. *Answ.* He is one that dares trust Gods providence for outward things, however he is in straits;

ſtraits; as it argues littleneſſe of faith, to diſtruſt Chriſt for food and raiment: ſo it argues ſtrength of faith, that though the viſion tarry, and no deliverance appear, yet then to live by faith, as the juſt are ſaid to do, this argues ſtrength of faith. Mat. 6. 25, 30. Hab. 2. 4.

He is one that labours for unity in the Church, as wel as for purity in the Church. He will labour for his power that Chriſts coat ſhall be without rent, as well as without ſpot. This character I gather from that exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheleſſe, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame thing.* It is a note thou art weak, when thou makeſt a ſtirre in the Church about thy opinions; weak children are moſt froward; when children are weak and ſickly, nothing will pleaſe them: ſo it is with ſome weak ones in the Church, their humour is ſuch; you know not how to pleaſe them; but a grown experienced Chriſtian is ſober and wiſe, and very earneſt to preſerve unity in the Church of Chriſt. *Anſw.* 9. Phil. 3. 15.

Before I proceed to ſpeak any more about ſtrength of grace; I ſhall make ſome application of what I have delivered about the marks and ſigns of ſtrong grace, and the uſe I ſhall make, ſhall be to give you ſome cautions about theſe foregoing characters, and there is need of a twofold Caution. *Uſe* 1.

1. Take heed you do not imagine your ſelves ſtrong in grace, when you are weak; this is a dangerous miſtake.

2. Take heed of thinking and judging your ſelves weak in grace, when you are ſtrong in grace; this is an uncomfortable miſtake.

Prov. 13.7. *There is a man* (ſaith *Solomon*) *that maketh himſelf rich, and hath nothing; and there is a man that maketh himſelf poor, and yet hath great riches.* I would therefore caution you that you may neither live above nor beneath what you have, that you may not proudly fancy you have what you have not, nor diſcouragedly fear you want what you indeed have.

1 *Uſe of Caution.*

2. You are not to meaſure the ſtrength of grace by the length of your Profeſſion. Many who are long *ſtanders* in the Profeſſion of Religion, are but *ſlow walkers* in the wayes and practice of Religion; the ſouls Proficiency in grace, is not the iſſue of length of time, but the fruit of free grace. There were thoſe in the Church for ſo long a time, that

Heb. 5.12. they *ought to have been teachers of others*, but they had attained but little growth or ſtrength of grace. They that came at the eleventh houre had their penny, as well as thoſe that came early into the Vineyard. The

Mat. 20.16 expounded. ſcope of which Parable is (as ſome interpreters ſay) to ſhew that thoſe who come late to the Profeſſion of Religion, may yet outgo many in gifts and graces, who have been long before them in Profeſſion. How many among

amongst us, their years speak them eighty, but their knowledge and grace not eighteen.

2. Measure not the strength of grace, by the strength of your affections to some of the wayes of God. The love of a newly married Couple may be more fond at first, afterwards it's more solid. Women who are the weaker vessels are usually more affectionate. Weak Christians are usually most affectionate. When the Creeple was cured, we read that upon his first cure he leaped for joy; it's likely he did not continue to do so: the newnesse of the change did much affect him, and so it doth young converts. Acts 14.10

3. *Measure not the strength of grace, by the abundance of the means of grace which you enjoy.* Alas, *Laodicea* had a glorious light shining amidst her; she was one of the *seven Candlesticks*. And because she had such meanes of grace, she mistook her selfe, saying, *I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.* But said Christ, *Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blinde, and naked.* Rev. 3.17.

4. *Measure not the strength of grace by the strength of your gifts.* There is a new disease amongst children called the *Rickets*, when children grow big in the head, but weak in their limbs: this disease is spiritually upon the souls of many our of Professors; their heads grow in respect of gifts & knowledge, but they do not grow strong to walk in the wayes of God; they are like the *Moon*, in-

creasing in light, but not in heat. In the dayes of the *Schoolmen* the gifts of men were very high, and yet the power of godlinesse was at a low ebbe in those dayes; there were in those times many *sublime notions*, *Seraphical speculations*, *curious distinctions*, *subtile objections*, and *elaborate answers* to them, *grave and weighty sentences*; but alas, but a little of the power of grace in the hearts of those men and them they taught.

2. *Caution.* 2. *Caution* is, to prevent mistakes of those who are apt to judge themselves weak in grace, when indeed they are strong in grace.

1. Because thou hast not perfection of grace, do not therefore conclude thou hast not strength of grace. Truth of grace is one thing, and strength of grace is another; so strength of grace is one thing, and perfection of grace is another. You must stay for perfection till you come to heaven; it is *then* only, *where the spirits of just men are made perfect*. Heb. 12 23 It is a witty observation that one hath; *In Grammar* (saith he) *the Present tense is accompanied with the Preter-imperfect tense, but the Future with the Preter-pluperfect tense.* Even such is our present state of grace, it's accompanied with imperfections;——but our future shall be more then perfect; *There is no Perfection here. There is not a just man on earth that doth good, and sinneth not,* (saith *Solomon*) Eccl. 7. 20. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean? If I wash my hands with snow-water,* (saith *Iob*) Pro. 20. 9. *and make my self never so clean; yet shalt thou*

plunge

plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhorre me. i.e. Though I have by Regeneration some grace, yet all my defilements shall never in this life be put away. In the Prophesie of *Zechariah* we have the Lord speaking thus: *I will refine them as silver, and will try them as gold is tryed*; and yet in the Prophet *Isaiah* God saith, *I have refined thee, but not with silver*; to reconcile both places, The meaning is, that though God begin to refine his people, yet they are not perfectly refined. Zech. 13.9. Isa. 48.10.

2. Do not judge thy self weak in grace, because thou hast not strong affections. God doth make up in the experience of old and grown Christians, what is wanting of the great affections they had at their first conversion. Holy *Greenham* often prayed that he might keep up his young zeal with his old discretion. What is wanting in affections God makes up to thee in solidity of judgement, clearnesse of knowledge, abundance of experience, and stableness in the faith. Mr. *Greenham.*

3. Judge not the strength of thy grace by the strength of thy comforts, the fruit may grow strong, when the blossome is off. I have spoken of this before; and therefore will adde this, that heavenly joyes and raptures are very sparingly found among Gods people. They are Gods special indulgences to some of his special children. I wil conclude with a Saying of that godly and learned Scotchman, *Whilst I live* (saith he) *I never expect to see perfect Reformation in the* Mr. *Rollock.*

Church, or feel perfect ravishing joyes in my heart.

VIII. Sermon at *Lawrence Jury London.* April 6. 1651.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

I Proceed now to answer some cases of conscience, which may be deduced from the Doctrine I have laid down.

Case 1. 1. *Whether strong temptations may be consistent with strong grace?* This is a needful and practical Case, because the People of God, when tempted by the devil, they do not only question the strength, but the truth of their grace.

Before I resolve this Case, I shall premise these general positions.

Posit 1. 1. It is certain, where there is truth of grace, there may be strong temptations from the devil. The devil is like a thiefe, which robs not out-houses, where there is nothing but dung and straw; but the Cabinets that are in the Closet: so this great thief of the world, he is not so eager to rob and spoil the out-houses, wicked and ungodly men; but those who have the riches of grace in the cabinets of their hearts, these he labours to rob and spoile: or as a Pirate, who sets not upon an empty vessel, but upon a ship laden with rich merchandize; those who are

fraught

fraught with the rich gifts of grace, the devil by his temptations, will labour to make prize of for himself.

2. Let the temptations of the devil be never so strong, yet they shall not be above the strength of grace, which believers have received from God. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* He will proportion the burden to the back, and the stroak to the strength of him who is to bear it; if temptations increase, our strength shall also increase, whereby we may be able to grapple with them. *Posit.* 2. 1 Cor. 10. 13.

3. It is evident, that the temptations of the devil are alwayes ordinarily most strong, after Gods people have discharged some extraordinary duties to God, or have received most discoveries of grace from God. In both these Cases the devils temptations are usually great. You finde that immediately after the Celebration of the Lords Supper *the devil desired to winnow the disciples*; after they had performed that extraordinary service to God, the devil was desirous presently to set upon them. So you finde that after Christ had in an extraordinary manner, *fasted forty dayes and forty nights*, he was immediately after tempted of the devil; and so also after his baptisme, *no sooner was he out of the water of Baptisme, but he was in the fire of temptation.* The *Israel* of God can be no sooner out of *Egypt*, but this hellish *Pharoah* pursues them. And *Hezekiah* had no sooner kept the solemn *Posit.* 3. Luke 22. 31. Mat. 4. 2, 3 Dr. Halls observations.

lemn Paſſeover, but *Senacherib* comes up againſt him. All this is to ſhew us, that after we have put forth moſt grace in a duty, then the devil will labour to play his aftergame with us, if he miſſe of his fore-game; if Satan cannot keep us from duty and from inlargment in duty, he will flie-blow our duties by pride and ſo marre them. And then after we have received the moſt eſpecial manifeſtations from Gods love and favour in Chriſt, then may we expect to be aſſaulted by the devil: Thus *Paul*, after he had *thoſe heavenly raptures, and abundance of Revelations*; the devil ſet upon him with vile temptations; he had *the meſſenger of Satan to buffet him, a thorn in the fleſh*; which is not to be meant of any diſeaſe, but of ſome ſharp temptation from the devil. So you finde that immediately after that voice to Chriſt, *This is my well beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed*, that then the Tempter came to him. Hence you may gather from that connexion between thoſe two Petitions in the Lord Prayer, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, and lead us not into temptation*: to note to us, that no ſooner can we get the evidence of our pardon, but we may expect to be tempted of the devil.

2 Cor. 12. 7.

Mat. 3. 17.

Poſit. 4. 4. That men who have the greateſt ſtrength of grace, are like to meet with the fierceſt aſſaults, and the ſtrongeſt temptations from the divel; and this brings me to anſwer the Caſe, *That ſtrength of grace may be conſiſtent with ſtrong temptations.* To clear and confirm this

this, there are these two particulars to be enquired into.

1. When temptations may be said to be strong?

2. How, and why such strong temptations may be consistent with strong grace?

1. *When temptations may be said to be strong?* *Quest.* 1.

1. Then may temptations be said to be strong, when the sollicitations of the devil to sin are urgent with the soule, when they are not weak and faint suggestions, but violent assaults, which wil not be removed until assented to; when the divel haunts a man so that he wil not let him alone, then may they be said to be strong. Thus it is said, *Satan stood up against Israel,*——i.e. He set himselfe to tempt *David. And provoked him,* i. e. He would not let him alone, but haunted him with hellish importunity,—— *till he had numbred the people.* *Answ.* 1. 1. Chron. 21. 1.

2. When they are frequent and continued. Small temptations often suggested become strong. Small drops of water by frequent falling make hollow the hard stone; which a few great and forcible blows wil not doe: so temptations, though but to small sins, if they be continued, may have greater entrance into the heart then a violent assault may.

3. When they are suited by the devil to a mans disposition or present condition; so was that temptation by which the devil set upon Christ, after he had fasted forty daies and forty nights: *Command,* says he, *that these*

stones

Mat. 4.3.

ſtones be made bread. It was ſuited to his preſent condition, meat for his hunger. If you offer meat to a naked man, he values it not, or cloaths to a hungry man, becauſe it is not ſuited to his preſent exigence: but if the gift you offer be ſuited to the mans neceſſity, cloaths to him that is naked, and meat to him that is hungry, then it becomes acceptable. The devil doth not caſt temptations at random, he is more ſubtil then to row againſt wind and tide, he knowes which way the ſtream of our affections and diſpoſitions runs, and he ſuits his baits accordingly. *Every man* (ſayes the Apoſtle) *is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own luſt and enticed.* It is a metaphor taken from Fiſhermen, who have this skill, that according to the nature of the fiſh, ſo they wil ſuit their bait, whereby they lie in wait to deceive either the ſight or the taſte of the poor fiſh. The divel is the great fiſher of ſouls, and makes uſe of ſuch temptations which are moſt likely to take; he obſerves to what ſins a mans Relations, Calling or opportunities lay him moſt open & obnoxious, and accordingly he layes his ſnare, and ſpreds his net. Though its true, that every man hath a principle within him ſuiting to every ſinne; yet it is as true that every man is not equally active for, or diſpoſed unto every ſin. The divel ſees what ſin is moſt predominant in man, and ſo he frameth a temptation ſutable; He ſets a wedge of Gold before a covetous *Achan*; *Cozby* an harlot

Jam. 1.14.

Δελεαζόμενος,— *Metaphora à Piſcatoribus, qui inescant, & hamo capiant.* Beza.

harlot, before an adulterous *Zimri*; a faire preferment before an ambitious *Abſalom*: he knows well, that a fit object preſented is a victory half obtained. In theſe three caſes temptations may be ſaid to be ſtrong.

How doth it appear that temptations ſo urgent, ſo continued, and ſo ſuited, may be conſiſtent with ſtrong grace? 2 Queſt.

By inſtances, whereby it appears the beſt of Gods children have been moſt tempted. *Job* a holy man, yet with what ſtrong temptations was he aſſaulted? the devil impoveriſhed him in his ſtate, and ſo would tempt him to diſtruſt Gods providence; took away the lives of his children, to make him queſtion providence; tormenting him with grievous diſeaſes, to make him clamour againſt providence; and above all this tempted him *to curſe God and die*, by the inſtigations of his wife; and yet though *Job* was thus haunted by the devil, he was a believer ſtrong in grace, and the moſt eminent Saint in that age, and that part of the world at that time, as God himſelfe teſtifies of him, *that there was none like him upon earth, a perfect and an upright man.*——He was not only for riches the greateſt of all the men of the Eaſt, but for holineſſe the greateſt upon the earth; yet thus was he afflicted and aſſaulted by the devil. Anſw. 1. Job 1.8.

Another inſtance there is of *David*, an eminent believer, and hath this commendation, *that he was a man after Gods own heart*, and

and yet how furiously was he tempted by the devil? one while Satan moved him to number the people, another time to defile another mans wife, another time to counterfeit himselfe mad before *Achish* King of *Gath*, another time to judge all his holy duties to be in vain, and at another time to question the faithfulnesse of God in his promise to make him King. *He said in his haste that all men were lyers*, even *Samuel* the Prophet also. Thus *Peter* an eminent Apostle of Christ, after he had made such a glorious confession of his faith, and had discovered more grace then in all his life time before, you finde him suddenly after by an instigation from the devil, begin to *rebuke* Christ, and counselling him to spare himselfe. And thus *Paul* that had such high and heavenly raptures, such divine extasies, yet had he the messenger of Satan to buffet him. But above all instances, you have *Jesus Christ*, who though he had perfect grace, and was full of grace and truth; yet this could not exempt him from the temptations of the divel. He was full of the holy Ghost, yet was he forty *daies tempted of the divel*, & that with strong temptations; if you consider their continuance, their urgency one after another, and suitability to that his present condition. So that it is plainly manifest, that strong temptations may be consistent with strength of grace by these instances given.

Mat. 16. 16 17 compared with 16. *Ch.* 22, 24.

2. It appears also by reasons drawn,

1. From

1. From God, for the clearer illuſtration of the glory of his own Attributes: and therefore the Scripture is clear in this. Particularly to ſhew how the temptations of Gods people make his Attributes to be more illuſtrious. As firſt, his Faithfulneſſe: *God who is faithfull will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able.* And then his Wiſdom: *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* He will by his wiſdom finde a way for their eſcape. And then alſo hereby will his pitty and compaſſion be made glorious; therefore *Chriſt became like unto us, that he might be a mercifull High-Prieſt, able to ſuccour and pitty thoſe that are tempted.* And then laſtly, the glory of his Power. In our weakneſſe God wil manifeſt his power, *for his ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſſe.* Thus it pleaſes God to exerciſe his people with great afflictions and temptations; for the ſetting out of his own glorious Attributes, and magnifying of his own name.

Reaſon 1.

1 Cor. 10. 13.

2 Pet. 2. 9.

Heb. 2. 17.

2 Cor. 12. 9

2. Another Reaſon may be drawn from Gods people themſelves.

Reaſon 2.

1. God in afflicting his children aimes at their good. Thus when the devil tempted *David* to number the people, and when he was ſacrificing at the floore of *Ornan* the Jebuſite, there did God tel him that the Temple ſhould be built, this was the iſſue of his temptation. So when *Job* was ſo tempted and afflicted, the iſſue of all was for his good. *Jobs* graces had never been ſo *illuſtrious*, had not the

2 Chron. 21. 1.

1 Chron. 3. 1.

the divels temptations been so *furious*. This is one end of Gods afflicting his people, that their graces may become more orient.

2. Another may be to check pride. There is no greater temptation in the world to pride, then eminency in grace. Pride It is that worst fruit, which growes upon the best stock. 'Tis not so much the ornaments of the body, as the endowments of the mind which
2 Cor. 12. 9 stirs up pride; and this was *Pauls* case, after his abundance of Revelations, there was a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be lifted up. God wil suffer those which have strong grace to be strongly tempted, to check the pride of their hearts.

3. The godly are more able to grapple with strong temptations then weaker Christians are, and so God suits the service and sufferings of his people, to the proportion of the strength of grace.

Reason 3. 3. Another reason may be taken from the devil, from that malice which he bears to all the people of God, and especially to those who have most grace; whom God loves most, the devil hates most. When the voice from Heaven said to Christ, *Thou art my wel-beloved sonne*, then came the devil to assault and to tempt him; if you are the objects of Gods deerest love, you wil be the objects of the devils deepest rage: and though he cannot damne thy soule, yet he wil trouble thy conscience; if he cannot break thy head, he will bruise thy heel. 2. It

2. It also proceeds from the devils knowledge, as wel as his malice; he knows, if he can but get those which are strong in grace to sin, he shall doe the more mischiefe, as

1. It wil open the mouth of wicked men to blaspheme God and Religion, as in the case of *David*, *By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.* 2 Sam. 12. 14. How were the mouths of Gods enemies opened to blaspheme his name?

2. It wil imbolden the weak to sin with more freedom, when they shall see those which are eminent to fall; and thus the example of *Peter* made the Gentiles to Judaize. Gal. 2. 14. When the strong shall abuse his liberty, he becomes a stumbling block to those which are weak. 1 Cor. 8. 9. When *Phigellus* and *Hermogenes* turned away from the faith how did all *Asia* turn aside also? 2 Tim. 1. 15. Men of eminent gifts, when they shall apostatize, how doe they draw others in abundance?

3. It wil provoke God to inflict heavy judgements on the places where you dwel. Thus the divel knew that if he could get *David* to number the people, it would procure a judgement upon them: and therefore it is not said, he stood up against *David*, but *against Israel, and provoked him to number the people*; he wel knew, if he could prevaile with *David*, all *Israel* should suffer for it. 2 Chron. 21. 1. Thus we see, that where there is strength of grace, there may be and are strong temptations.

But here may an objection be raised from *Object.*

1 Joh. 5, 18
1 Joh. 2, 18.

that of *John*, where it is said, *He that is born of God sinneth not, and keepeth himself that the wicked One toucheth him not, & that they which are strong have overcome the wicked one.* And if this be so, how can that be truth, that strong temptations from the devil, may be consistent with strong grace in the heart?

Sol. When it is said, *the wicked one toucheth him not*, it is not to be taken absolutely, as if the devel did not tempt a man at all, therefore there must be a restriction of the clause, *he touches him not*, that is, with a deadly touch; and so *Cajetan*, *This phrase excludes not the kinds of temptations, but that we are not hurt or eternally destroyed by them.* But I conceive rather that these words have a peculiar reference to the 16 verse, where is mention made of a sin unto death; the devel shall not prevaile, or touch a man so, as to commit that sin which is unto death. Though he may tempt, and will be continually assaulting a man, yet he shall never prevaile against him so as to draw him to the committing of that sinne.

Use 1. From hence we may learn the indulgence of God to weak Christians; while their graces are weak their temptations shall not be strong. God will not put weak Christians upon such strong trials, as those who have obtained greater measures of grace. Not every man in *Davids* Army was put to break through the Army of the Philistines to fetch of the waters of the Well of Bethlehem

lehem, but *Davids* three Worthies. God will not put young Converts to break through an Host of temptations, until they shall have obtained experience and strength of grace to grapple with them.

2. Hence also learn, that men of the strongest and most eminent gifts and graces ought not to presume upon their own strength. *Consider thy self, lest thou also be tempted.* Thou which art most *spiritual*, take heed lest thou be foiled. Some mens pride may make them think they are above *Ordinances*, yet their own experience may satisfie them that they are not above *temptations*, and certainly they which are not above *temptations*, wil stil stand in need of *Ordinances*; now no man in the world, either is or shall be above temptation; if any, surely *Adam* would, yet he in Paradise, the best of places; and in Innocency, the best of states, was not exempted from the temptations of the divel, and thereby fell; therefore let no man presume upon his own strength. *Use 2.* Gal. 6.1.

3. Remember this for thy comfort, that though the divel tempt thee with strong temptations, yet he shall never have his wil against thee. It is true, a godly man may fall into that particular act unto which the devil tempts him, yet as to the devils general aime (the damning of thy soul) he shall never have his wil. It is a notable expression that of our Saviours to *Peter*, sayes he, *Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as* Luk. 22.31

about. Satan hath desired *to have thee*, that was the devils general aym. Though he may have his wil as to a particular act, and thou mayest yield to his temptation, yet he shall never carry thee with himself into Hell.

4. Remember to your great comfort, you who are the people of God, and harrassed with the divels temptations; thou complainest that they are great for kind, long for continuance, and the more dangerous because suited to thy present condition. Remember, that thus the divel dealt with Jesus Christ, his temptations were *suiting, continued*, and for kinds *gross*, being to distrust providence, to self-murder, and to blasphemy; and why was all this, but for thy comfort? he suffered being tempted, that he might be able to pity, compassionate, and succour thee, being in the same condition. Heb. 2.18.

IX. Sermon at *Lawrence Jury London.* April 6. 1651.

2 TIM. 2.1.

My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

WE proceed now to the second Case of conscience, concerning strength of grace, which is this:

Case 2. *Whether strength of grace may be consistent with strength of lust and corruption in the heart.*

In the answering whereof I shall speak to these particulars: 1. When

1. When may corruptions be ſaid to be ſtrong?
2. Why thoſe that have ſtrong grace, have many times ſtrong corruptions?
3. What ſtrong corruptions are they that thoſe that are ſtrong in grace, are moſt ſubject unto?
4. In what caſes, and with what limitations may ſtrength of corruptions conſiſt with ſtrength of grace?

Queſt. 1. 1. *When may corruptions and luſts be ſaid to be ſtrong in the ſoule?*

Anſw. 1. 1. When ſins are committed with complacency. Sin at firſt is like a ſnake that is almoſt ſtarved by reaſon of the cold, and is very weak and feeble; but if it be laid in the boſome, then it gathers ſtrength, and after a while ſin revives and becomes a delight in the ſoul. If thou wert at firſt troubled at ſin, and afterwards takeſt pleaſure in ſin, its a ſigne that ſin hath a great hand over thee. Thus God complaines of his people, *What hath my beloved to doe in my houſe? —When thou doſt evil then thou rejoyceſt.* Jer. 11. 15. We may know the power and ſtrength of corruption in us, by ſins activity in us, and by our chearfulneſs and complacency in ſin.

Anſw. 2 2. By the frequency of ſin, as a relapſe into a diſeaſe, argues the ſtrength of that peccant humour in the body: ſo reiterated and multiplied acts of the ſame ſin, argue the power and ſtrength of that ſin in our hearts. Corruption gathers ſtrength even as grace doth

by the frequent acting and exercise of it.

Answ. 3. 3. When sin is persisted in against the checks of conscience. And it argues the strength of a streame that it beares down before it whatsoever bank would check the course of it: So it also argues that there is a strong current of corruption in thy soul, that bears down before it all the warnings, checks and reproofs of conscience.

Quest. 2. 2. *Why have those that have the strongest graces, many times also the strongest corruptions?*

Answ. 1. 1. It ariseth from the natural temperature and constitution of the body, which doth dispose men to some sin more then another, although they have such eminency of grace; and hence it is, that those who are naturally and constitutionally passionate, and given to anger, though they may have a great measure of grace, yet what ado have they to bridle in their anger? what ado to be greatly angry, and not greatly sinful? And so such whose temperature inclines them to be lustful, though they have much grace, yet all little enough to suppresse lustfull thoughts and wanton looks in them.

Answ. 2. 2. God suffers this to humble his People, and to keep them humble under their great measures of grace. It is observable in nature, that those creatures which have the most excellency in them, have something also of defect and deformity in them, as if the God of nature did it to keep them humble. The Peacock hath glittering feathers, and yet

Black

black feet; The Swan hath white feathers, but under that a black skin; The Eagle hath many excellencies, quick sight, and high flight, but yet very ravenous; The Camel and Elephant are great and stately creatures, but of a deformed shape: So it is in the state of grace, God doth suffer some strong & unsubdued corruptions to remain in them, who have not only truth, but strength of grace, and this is to keep them humble. Thus *Paul* after his great Revelation, had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and a thorne in the flesh to afflict and keep him humble; the thorn in the flesh did let out the impostumated matter of pride out of his heart; and the considerations of their corruptions doth much affect the hearts of the godly, that they become, 1. More condescending and compassionate to the weak. 2. They do depend lesse upon their own righteousnesse. They see it is in vain to think of establishing their own righteousnesse, and that it is too weak a foundation to lay the weight and stresse of their salvation upon: the Covering is too narrow, and the Bed is too short for them to rest quietly upon. 3. They are hereby brought to think better of others then of themselves, yea to judge themselves *the least of Saints, and the greatest of sinners.* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

3. This is from Satans malice, who if he can draw out great corruptions from them who are eminent in grace; *Answ.* 3.

1. He thereby aims to blemish Religion

and to darken the honour of Profession, and in this case usually fights against none, *great nor small, but the King of Israel*, viz. such as are eminent for holiness. When *David* fell into those great sins of murder and adultery, Satan had a main end granted him, to make the way of true Religion stink and be abhorred.

2 Sam. 12. 14.

2 Hereby Satan hath his end to imbolden those that are weak to sin. The sins and great miscarriages of such as are great Professors are great stumbling blocks in the way of the weak to make them fall.

1 Cor. 8. 10

3. Hereby the peace and purity of conscience is violated; the devil will play at small game rather then at no game: and if he cannot prevail to damn thy soul, yet he will endeavour to disquiet thy conscience.

Quest. 3. 3. *What are those great corruptions and sins unto which strong believers are incident?*

Answ. 1. 1. To lose those strong affections which they had at their first Conversion. Holy *Greenham* complained, that it was very difficult to keep together his old discretion and young zeal. —— Young Christians (as hath been already observed) have strong affections, and but weak judgements. Their heat is more then their light. Their present apprehension and sense is great and high, their experience little and low. And so also strong Christians, who may have much grace, yet the flood and flush of affections may be much abated, and it is the fault of old professors,

fessors, that they do not labour to maintain the primitive vigour and vivacity of their first affections; they are too apt *to leave their first love*, yet we must know they do not decay so as to be bankerupts, in grace. In the godly the decay and declining, though it may be great, yet it is neither total nor final; though he may fail, yet he is not a banquerupt, he hath still a stock remaining which can never be quite spent, a fountaine which can never be quite dry. *He hath in him a Well of water springing up to eternall life.* The water of a fountain may be mudded, but it will clear it self again. It may be damm'd up in one place, but it will break out in another; so it is with grace. A tree, you know, in Winter season, the fruit and leaves fall off, and it seems as if it were dead, but there is life in the root; so it is in Christians, their beauty and blossom may fall off, their fruit dry up, their leaves drop off, the beauty, the exercise and the fruits of grace may cease for a time, and yet *the root of the matter is in them.* It often fares with old Professors, as it did with old *David*, of whom it is said, that all the cloaths he did wear, *could not get or keep heat in him*: So they, all the duties they perform, and all the Ordinances they enjoy, cannot keep up that youthful heat of vigorous affections which once they had. Many of Gods children have not now as once they had, such complacency in God, such fervency in prayer, such attention in hearing, such delight

Rev. 2.3,4.

Joh. 4.14.

Job 19 28

1 King. 1.1

delight in Sabbaths, such mournfulnesse and tendernesse of spirit, such hatred of sin. Now they have not such aggravating thoughts of sin, as in former times, nor the occasions unto sin, so avoided as formerly. How many are there, who heretofore look'd on every sin as an hainous evil, but now do not so: time was when every gnat seemed a camel, and every mote a beame, and every molehil a mountain, but now they can extenuate and excuse their sin. Heretofore the most pleasing sin was abominable, the smallest detestable, and the highest intolerable, but it is otherwise now through spiritual decayes and abatement in our affections. There are many heretofore when they fell into sin, were wont to walk sadly, to sigh deeply, weep bitterly, pray affectionately; but now do not these things with those warme and working affections as formerly. The time was when many Professors of Religion, prepared themselves for holy duties with more care, attended to them with more diligence, delighted in them with more complacency, and gained more profit and edification by them then now they do. And that's the first sin, that those who have grace, both in truth and strength, are apt to fall into, viz. spiritual decay.

Answ. 2. 2. Such as are strong Christians are very subject to spiritual pride, and to be highly conceited of their own gifts, parts and graces. Spiritual pride is a secret spiritual cor-

ruption

ruption, that is in the most spirituall and gracious heart; it is a bad fruit that growes on the best root: there is nothing better then grace, and there is nothing more abominable then sin, and there is no sin so bad as pride, and there are none so apt to fall into this sin of pride, as they that have much grace, and there is nothing weakens a strong Christian more then pride, and nothing argues weakneſſe more then this boasting.

3. To behave themselves with contempt and superciliousneſſe towards weak Christians, is an ordinary fault of the strong. There is not any one thing in Scripture more often mentioned then this, that we should not despise or discourage the weak, which notes an aptneſſe in the strong to be faulty herein. *Let us not judge one another any more.* The word *μηκέτι* notes, they were wont to do so before. Spiritual pride is a root of bitterneſſe, which bears these two bitter fruits. 1. An over-valuing of our selves. 2. An under-valuing of other mens persons and gifts. *Answ.* 3. Rom. 14. 1, 2, 3. Vers. 13. Μηκέτι ἀλλήλους κρίνωμεν.

4. Strong Christians are apt to put too much duty and task upon the weak. *John's* disciples failed in this towards the disciples of Christ about fasting. Strong Christians should deal tenderly with the weak, they should excuse their failings, conceale their weakneſſes, commend their performances, cherish their forwardneſſe, resolve their doubts, bear their burdens, and hereby make the way of Religion to be lovely Mat. 9. 16, 17.

lovely and amiable to them, whereas by their too much austerity the weak are disheartned at their first entrance.

5. To be content with measures of grace. How apt are they that have grace to say in one sense, as he said in another, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years*; and hereupon many grow slack and careless in holy duties, and do not improve ordinances for the increase of their graces. The best of Christians are apt to fall into this satiety, then which nothing can be more prejudicial to the soul. The devil tempts those that have but a little grace to thinke they have none, and those that have more grace to think they have enough. The best are apt to mistake themselves in this, to think that there is a just dimension and full growth of grace attainable in this life: Whereas indeed the best improvement of having much grace, is to desire more, and not to be satisfied with any measure of grace *till we come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ*, and that's not attainable in this life. Perfection is the aime of this life, but it is the reward of another life. We should endeavour after Perfection in grace, but we shall not attain it till grace be perfected in glory.

Luk 12 19

Eph. 4. 13.

Quest. 4. *In what ease, and with what limitations may strength of corruptions consist with strength of grace?*

The resolving of this question is of very much

much use to the soul: for that soul that is over-mastered with strong corruptions, may not only question the strength of his grace, but the being of it. How may I then know, that I have both the truth and strength of grace in me, though I am overpowered sometimes by strong and prevailing corruptions?

1. If you maintain in you a strong opposition against your corruptions. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, *but doth the Spirit lust against the flesh?* though you cannot fully subdue sin, yet do you strongly oppose it? if so, there is grace and strength of grace too, which is able to make and hold up this opposition. An uncontrolled subjection unto sin, argues the strength of sin; but an irreconcileable opposition of sin argues the strength of grace. Strength of grace is not so much seen in those particular acts of suppression, and actual overcoming of it, as in that constant and habitual frame of heart in the opposition of sinne. *Answ.* 1 Gal. 5. 17.

2. Though sin be strong, yet grace may be strong too in thy soul. If thou hast a strong measure of humiliation, though thy sin be great, if thy sorrow be great too, it evidenceth thy grace is so also. It was great grace in *Manasseh*, that he *humbled himself greatly*, though he had been a very great sinner. *Answ.* 2. 2 Chron. 33. 12.

3. If thou hast strong cryes to God against thy sins, this argues grace, though it be ready to be *distempered* by thy corruptions. If when

when corruptions and temptations prevaile, thou prayest to the Lord with *strong cryes and teares*; this argues grace, yea and the strength of grace.

Deut. 22. 26. 27.

Answ. 4. 4. If thou hast strong affections that carry thee to Christ, certainly thou hast grace, though thy strong corruptions often carry thee from Christ. *Peter* had more infirmities and corruptions and sins, then all the disciples besides (excepting *Judas*.) He tooke Christ aside, gave him carnal counsel, and said as to his sufferings, *Far be it from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee*; for which Christ said to him, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* He dreams of merit, and boasts of what he had done for Christ, as it is observed of him, when he said to Christ, *Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?* *Peter* of all the disciples was the most confident of his own strength; and boasts what he would do and suffer for Christ; *Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. And if I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* Nay and presently after this confident undertaking, *Peter* denies Christ, and sweares and curses that he knew him not. Some observe, that *Peter's* cursing, was not only his cursing of himself if he knew Christ, but that he also cursed Jesus Christ, that so he might appear to them to be none of his disciples; and yet notwithstanding all this *Peter* had not only truth and reality, but eminency

Mat. 16. 22

Mat. 19. 27

Mat. 26. 33 35.

ency and strength of grace: for though temptations and corruptions did sometimes prevail, yet he had strong affections towards Jesus Christ; he did and suffered that which few or none of the other disciples did.

1. He was the man, that of all the disciples wept most bitterly for his sins. Mat. 26. 75

2. *Peter* was the first that ran to the sepulchre, and went into the sepulchre to see what was become of Christ. Joh. 20. 5.

3. He was the man, who hearing that Christ was risen and on the sea-shore, leap't into the sea for joy. Joh. 21. 7.

4. He was the man that made the first Sermon, and first preached the Gospel after the Ascension of Christ. Act. 1. 15.

5. He had that love to Christ which was as strong as death; for he suffered death, and was crucified, (as say Ecclesiastical Writers) but would not be crucified, but with his heels upwards, deeming it too great an honour to be crucified in the same manner that his Lord and Master was: so that the strength of his affections, did argue notwithstanding his great failings, the strength of grace in him.

Application.

Vse 1.

To make application of what hath been spoken in this case of Conscience——

Though in the cases before mentioned, strength of grace may be consistent with strength of corruptions; yet there are other cases wherein they are altogether inconsistent.

1. When

1. When the ſtrength and workings of corruptions are not clearly diſcovered to the ſoul; for grace alwayes, as a light ſet up in the ſoul, doth diſcover the darkneſſe of corruption.

2. Where corruptions are not ſenſibly bewailed, it is to be feared that there is not ſtrength of grace.

3. Where occaſions to thoſe ſtrong prevailing ſins and corruptions are not heedfully avoided. Certainly if thou haſt grace to make thee ſenſible of what corruptions thou art incident unto, thy grace will make thee walk ſo circumſpectly, as to avoid all occaſions leading thereunto.

4. If they be not ſtrongly reſiſted, and the beginnings of each corruption not diligently ſuppreſſed, in this caſe ſtrength of grace and ſtrength of corruption are utterly inconſiſtent.

5. Though there may be ſtrong grace and ſtrong corruption in the ſoul, yet the reign of any one corruption is utterly inconſiſtent with grace and the ſtrength of it. *Let not ſin reign in your mortall bodies. Sin ſhall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace*; which is not to be underſtood in the *Antinomiſts* ſenſe, that believers are not under the mandatory power of the moral Law: But the meaning of the word (Law) as *Beza* interprets it, *is the law of ſin*, and ſo the Apoſtle *Paul*, chap. 7. 23, mentions *a law in his members that did war againſt the*

Rom. 6. 12, 14. expounded, and compared with Rom. 7. 23.

law

law of his minde, and did bring him into captivity to the law of sin, that is; sin would have swayed in him with the power and force of a law. And this argued grace and the strength of grace in *Paul*, that though he was over-born by the strength of corruption and sin, and taken Prisoner by it, yet he never yielded to it as to a lawfull Soveraign; for so he addes, *vers.* 29. *So then with the mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin.* It may be said of the corruptions in Gods children, what was shewed to *Daniel* concerning the beasts, *They had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season.* Rom. 7. 25. Dan. 9. 12.

6. When we say there is a consistency between grace and corruption; I would be understood of spiritual and inward corruptions, as hardnesse of heart, spiritual pride, deadnesse in duties: for into grosse external, open acts of evil, strong Christians do seldom fall.

7. We must also be further informed, that if we consider particular acts of sin, some one lust may seem to be more strong in a godly Christian, then in a meer moral man. As for instance, in the case of lust, when we consider how *David* did abuse his neighbours wife, and how *Abimelech* would not touch another mans wife; one would have judged *David* the heathen, and *Abimelech* the believer, and therefore the strength of grace or corruption must not be judged by any

one particular act when some impetuous temptation hath prevailed.

8. Lastly, we are to know that a corruption may be really weak'ned when sensibly strong. As a man in a Feaver is seemingly strong, but is really weak: so corruption may be then most enfeebled when in our apprehension it is most inraged; it may rave and rage when it is in crucifying. As a cole glows most just before its going out; a candle burnt't down in the socket gives a blaze a little before it be extinct: so it is when corruption is ready to expire. As in a meer moral man sin may be restrained when it is not subdued; corruption may be quiet where it is not mortified: So in a regenerate person it may be subdued and mortified, where yet it may rage as if unrestrained. A mans last gaspe may be the strongest breath: So when corruption is ready to give up the Ghost it may seem to breath strongest. As a bird may flutter when his neck is broken: so sin may seemingly resist grace, when the power, strength and life of it is utterly broke.

X. Sermon At *Lawrence Jwy, London.* April 13. 1651.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

WE have already handled two great *Cases of Conscience* about *strength of*

grace, about the consistency of strong temptations and strong corruptions with the strength of grace, and shall now proceed to a third Case, which is this,

3. *Whether strength of grace may consist with the want of those strong affections, which Christians have had at their first conversion?* Case 3.

In answering whereof I shall endeavour to shew three things.

1. When a man may be said to lose his first affections?

2. In what Cases may a strong Christian want strong affections?

3. Whence it is that those that have strong grace may want such strong affections as they had at their first Conversion?

1. *When may a Christian be said to lose his first affections?* Affections are fitly compared to the pulses of the soul, by which may judgement be given of the state and temper of the soul; and that we may know when these affections beat low and are decayed, we may make judgement hereof. Quest. 1.

1. When we have not such eager desires after duties. It is very remarkable, that at a Christians first conversion, he is so earnest and eager after holy duties, that he will hardly allow time for the duties of his particular calling; nay how have men at first tyed themselves to hear so many Sermons, make so many Prayers, read so many Chapters, spend so many houres in holy Meditation by our selves, and good conference Answ. 1.

with other Christians? But alas, afterward this fervour begins to cool and remit, and men pray lesse, and hear more seldome, and this is from the multitude of their worldly occasions. Usually men at their first conversion, (which as Divines have observed) ordinarily doth fall out between the eighteenth and twenty eighth year of their age (though God indeed be tyed to no year) yet men at that age have usually lesse of the world, and so it comes to passe, that afterward when the cares and profits, and pleasures of the world steal away their affections, that they grow much more remisse then they were at the beginning.

Answ. 2. 2. Affections may be judged to be decayed when men have not such ravishing joyes as we were wont to have. How many have been at first in *Davids* frame of heart, *I was glad when they said to me, come let us go into the house of the Lord?* but afterwards the overeflowing of this flood of joy by degrees hath abated.

Psal. 122. 1

Answ. 3. 3. When sensible profit by Ordinances is abated. A man may profit by Ordinances, and yet not be sensible of that his profiting. A Christian may grow at the root in solidity of grace, though it may be not shoot up so much in blossomes of affection.

Quest. 2. 2. *In what Cases may a strong Christian want strong affections?*

Answ. 1. 1. In case you have lesse sin in duties, though lesse affections. A weak young convert hath oftentimes much affection in holy

duties

duties, but much corruption too. They are very ſubject to raſhneſſe and precipitancy in their Prayers, and to be proud of any ſmall meaſures of grace in duty, and too apt to have carnal dependance upon their duties: But old experienc't Chriſtians, as they have often leſſe affection, ſo leſſe ſin in duties. Papiſts have very much affection in the performance of their devotions: but alas, they have the leaven of this errour in their beſt duties, that they think they merit by them: but grown and knowing Chriſtians, though they may not be ſo affectionate in duty, as the weak, yet they may exerciſe much more grace then they do. And ſo alſo it is after duties are performed. Weak Chriſtians are apt to indulge their corruptions afterwards, thinking they have made a compenſation for their ſins by their duties: But an experienced grown Chriſtian, though not ſo affectionate in duty, yet he is carefull afterwards that he do not by ſin ſpoyle all his duties.

2. A ſtrong Chriſtian may want ſtrong affections, in caſe he hath ſtrength of judgement to recompence the want of his affections. *Young trees are more ſappy, but old trees are more ſolid*; Wherefore the Apoſtle prayes for the *Philippians*, not only that *their love might abound*, but that *their judgement might alſo abound*. As a man that is come to his full age, though he do not grow in bulke and extenſion of parts; yet he grows intenſively, and

Anſw. 2

Phil. 1.9.

and in the conſolidation of the parts of the body: ſo old and experienced Chriſtians, though they have not ſo much affection; yet they have more ſolidity and clearneſſe of judgement, more experimental knowledge in the profound myſteries of the Goſpel, and more diſtinct apprehenſions of the deep things of Chriſt. A ſtrong believer, what he wants in affections he hath compenſated to him in a diſtinct and experimental knowledge of the deceitfulneſſe of his heart, of the vanity of the world, of the ſinfulneſſe of ſin, and of the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt. New converts are raſh, inconſiderate, injudicious; and therefore we have a promiſe made to new converts, that they ſhall proceed in grace. It is a promiſe made to the Gentiles when the Kingdom of Chriſt ſhall come amongſt them, that though at the firſt they were raſh, yet it is ſaid, *The heart of the raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge, and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak plain.* Affection without knowledge will be but raſhneſſe, which (like metal in a young horſe) will be apt to precipitate him and make him ſtumble. An experienced Chriſtian though he have not ſo much ſeeming metal in his affection, yet ſhall rid more way to heaven by farre then a young Convert, and that without fear of ſtumbling. At the firſt kindling of the fire, there may be more ſmoak, though afterward the flame will be clearer: So when at firſt thou haſt much affection,

Iſa. 32. 4.

after-

afterwards thou shalt have a clearer judgment.

3. A strong Christian may want strong affections in case it proceed from a natural temper, and not from a sinful careless distemper. There are some persons that are naturally of a soft and tender disposition, and these are naturally more affectionate; nay the woman who is the weaker vessel, commonly her heart holds most affection: And so likewise there are some who naturally are more bound up in their affections, and are of a reserved temper, who naturally do not break out into any great expression either of the passion of joy or grief. We read in the *Gospel*, that they that exprest most affection to Christ at his death, and made the most passionate lamentation for him, were the *women*, who naturally are of a more melting disposition. Some mens dispositions are like ice, they will easily thaw and melt; others like iron, it must be a hot fire that will melt them down: So it is, some men will be more affectionate upon a small occasion then others upon a greater, and this is from naturall disposition. *Melanthon* was not so affectionate as *Luther*, but it is observed that he was more judicious. *Answ.* 3. Luke 23. 27.

4. In case of sickness and old age, and bodily weakness, He that hath strength of grace may yet want strength of affection. The expression of our affection depends much upon the temperature of the body, if *Answ.* 4.

bodily ſtrength and vigour be impaired, our affections muſt needs flag. As the ebbing and flowing of the ſea depends upon the motion and influence of the Moon: So our affections do ebbe and flow much what, as the ſtrength or weakneſſe of the body hath an influence upon them. As a Muſician when he is grown old, cannot ſo dexterouſly handle an inſtrument, as when he was young, though perhaps he hath now more judgement and experience in muſick; ſo it is in old age, that brings experience in the wayes of God, yet may abate affections. Old age and ſickneſſe makes the body like a tyred horſe to the active ſoul; an active traveller would faine ride away to his journeys end, but his horſe is tyred. An aged ſickly Chriſtian may have as much grace and more then he had at firſt, and yet not be ſo able to pray; and ſo a Miniſter not ſo able to preach affectionately as before; and this from the indiſpoſition of the body.

Queſt. 3. 3. *Whence it is that thoſe that have ſtrength of grace, may yet want thoſe ſtrong affections which they had at their firſt converſion?*

Anſw. 1 1. Becauſe at firſt converſion grace was but particularly imployed, which afterwards was more diffuſed and generally imployed. When much water runs in one Channel it makes the ſtream the ſtronger; but when there are many rivulets cut out, though there is as much and more water, yet there is not the ſame ſtrength of ſtream: So it is at

our

our first conversion, all our affections made but up one stream, and so our affections seemed the stronger. A new convert hath not so many duties to performe as a grown Christian hath, because he doth not know so many duties. It may be at first all his affections run out to pray, and hear the Word, and read good books, and whilest all the affections run in this one channel they seem to be very strong; whereas a grown Christian he hath not only these generall duties, but many particular duties of his calling and relations to follow, he hath many duties to perform to God and men, which a new convert knowes not, and therefore it is that though his affections may seem weaker, yet his grace is as strong as before & stronger.

2. This is from the newnes of the condition. Naturally we are much affected with any new thing, as for example, for a man that hath been many years in a dark dungeon, to be suddenly brought into the light, the suddennesse of the change would much affect a man. This is the state of our souls at our first conversion; we are *therefore brought from darknesse into light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* By the grace of conversion, *God calls us out of darknesse into his marvellous light*; and because it is so marvellous, therefore it doth so much affect. The change at first conversion is very great, a man becomes another man, and man is so affected, that he is put into a kinde of astonishment. Yet

Answ. 2.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

Yet in this case we must distinguish between solid affections, and floting and transient passions, which do wear off presently, and vanish suddenly. The affections of some Christians, especially young ones, are like those colours which are not in grain, they will soon fade. It is with a young Convert as with a man going to execution, while he is upon the ladder a pardon is unexpectedly brought, how will this man be transported with joy? he will leap for joy, he will in that case be all joy & exultation for the present, and it may be afterward the flush & torrent of his joy is abated, though his life be as dear to him as ever: So when the soul hath been brought by the Law of God to a sight of its lost condition, & then the Gospel hath proclaimed a pardon, & the Spirit of God hath set on the comfort of that pardon upon his heart. Oh what raviſhments hath that soule for the present! which perhaps he shall not long retain, the violence of his joy is abated, but the solidity of it remains. The soule is much affected with its first meeting with Christ, and though the flush of that joy be over, yet the souls love to Christ is as much, and its prizing Communion with Christ the same. The Creeple when he was restored to strength, went leaping and praising God, because the unexpectednesse of the cure did mightily affect his heart; and this is a second reason why those who are grown and solid Christians, yet perhaps may not retain the

Act. 3. 8.

same

same measure of affections they had at their first conversion.

3. A third Reason may be taken from Gods indulgence to young Converts, who usually gives in comfort according to the necessity of his people. It is with God our heavenly Father as with naturall Parents, they are most tender over their new-born children. That parable of the returning Prodigall is very full to this purpose; his father did not onely receive him mercifully, but bountifully too, he gave him more then was for necessity; not onely *shoes*, but a ring; not only *clothes*, but the *best robe*; not only *bread*, but the *fatted calfe*, and musick at this Feast, and all this was for this newly converted and repenting son, though his father did not entertain him so every day. So our God, at our first conversion expresseth much of his bounty and indulgence to his children, though afterward we may have the same love of God, & the same love to God, though the expressions may not be the same now, as formerly in those daies of Gods bounty.

Answ 3.

Luke 15. 22.

Let us from hence learn, that though we have lost those affections which we had, yet we must

Vse.

1. Labour to be sensible of, and humbled for those decayes. A decayed condition is an uncomfortable condition; though thou hast so much grace as will bring thee to heaven, yet by thy decayes thou wilt be very uncomfortable here on earth.

2. La-

2. Labour to get those decays repaired.

Rev. 2. 4, 5. If thou *hast left thy first love, repent and doe thy first works.*

3. Make up the want of former affections in solidity of knowledge and judgement; and if the candle give not so great a blaze, let it give a more clear and constant light.

4 Labour to keep up the primitive vigour of your affections.

1. Remember you may lose that in a short time, which you may be a long time in recovering. A man may lose more strength in one weeks sickness, then many months will make reparation. A wound may be quickly made, but not so soon cured. Philosophers wil tel us, that the way from the habit to the privation is far easier, then from the privation to the habit; it is far easier to make a seeing man blind, then to make a blind man see; so it is far easier to lose our holy affections, then it is to recover them.

2. Labour to keep up your holy affections: for the truth of grace is more discerned by our affections then our actions. Acts of grace may be easier dissembled then gracious affections. A Painter may paint the colour, but not the heat of the fire.

3. Labour to keep up affections as they were at first, because it is very hard to retain them: it is hard to keep them wound up to any height. Flush of spiritu all joy is like the sea; the tide doth not so flow, but the ebbe doth fall as low. *Bernard* said of these strong

gusts

gusts and great flush of these spirituall joyes and gracious affections, *They come but seldom, and stay but a short time.* As in nature there is a spring, and then the fall of the leafe, and one day is clear, and another is cloudy: so it is with the best Christian, his affections are not alwaies at the same pitch, at the same height; but it should be our endeavour to cherish and maintain in our soules our first flourishing affections, in and towards the waies of God.

Rara hæc, brevis mora.

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2 Tim. 2. 1.

——*My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

XI. Sermon at *Lawrence Jury London.* April 13. 1651.

HAving dispatched three Cases of conscience concerning strength of grace; I now proceed to a fourth, viz.

Case 4. *Whether a man that hath strength of grace, may want the comfort of his grace?*

Answ. I shall answer this question affirmatively; A man that hath the strength of grace yet may want the comfort of it: Strength of grace (as you have heard) doth not exempt a man from temptations from the divel, nor from desertions from God. It is an undoubted rule, there may be strength of grace, where there is not the comfort and evidence of it. A child of light may walk in darkness for

for a time; and though he have the holy Ghoſt working grace, and encreaſing grace in his heart, yet he may want the oyle of gladneſſe, though he have received a precious
1 Joh. 2. 27 *anoynting* of grace. A child of God, as to his ſpirituall condition, may for a time be in the ſame condition that *Paul* and the Marriners were in, *who for many daies had neither ſun nor*
Act. 27. 20 *ſtars appearing, being under no ſmall tempeſt, hopes of being ſaved being taken away:* So it fares with Gods deareſt children, they may be in the dark and can ſee no light, they may have the graces of the Spirit, and yet want the comforts of the Spirit.

In the opening of which point I ſhall thus proceed.

1. I wil prove this from Scripture, that a child of God may be ſtrong in grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace.
2. I wil lay down ſome reaſons, why it is thus.
3. Some directions, how thoſe that have grace, and yet doe want the comfort of their graces, ſhould procure unto themſelves the comfort of their graces.
4. And then I ſhall commend ſome comfortable conſiderations to ſuch as have grace, but want the comfort of it.

1. For the firſt, I ſhall give you inſtances both in the Old and New Teſtament, that thoſe that have been ſtrong in grace have wanted comfort.

1. *Job* a man eminent for grace, *a perfect*

and

and upright man, and one that feared God and eschewed evil: and yet you have *Job* complaining, *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?* nay, God did not onely hide his face, but handle him as his enemy; for he thus makes his moan, *He tears me in his wrath*, that is to be referred to God, and not unto the divel, or to *Jobs* unmercifull enemies, or uncharitable friends. *He teareth me*, that is, *God teareth me. Who in my apprehension* (saith *Job*) *hateth me, and gnasheth upon me with his teeth, and as an enemy, sharpeth his eyes upon me.* And that these sad apprehensions were upon *Job*, that God was his enemy, see him further lamenting himself, *He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, and mine hope hath he removed as a tree, he hath also kindled his wrath against me, and counted me unto him as one of his enemies.* Yea, *destruction from God was a terrour to him.*

Job 13.24.

Job 16.9.

Job 19.10, 11.

Job 31.23.

2. *Asaph*, a holy man, yet thus complains, *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise faile for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* These are the sad expostulations of a troubled spirit cast down under deep dejections, and in the dark, by reason of the suspension of divine favour.

Psal. 77.7,

3. *David*, a man after Gods heart, whose gracious breathings though the whole book of Psalms, shew that he was a man of an excellent spirit, and had much grace. Yet *David*

wanted

wanted the comfort of his grace, when his ſoul was caſt down, and his ſpirit was diſquieted within him. And ſo

Pſal. 42. 5.

Pſal. 88.

4. *Heman*, a man who for wiſdom ſo eminent, that the Holy Ghoſt uſeth him as an inſtance of wiſdome, *As wiſe as Heman*, and yet in the 88. Pſalme, quite through that Pſalme, was a ſtraine of as ſad a complaint as you ſhall meet withall in the whole book of God. *Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt pit, in darkneſſe, in the deep, thy wrath lyeth hard upon me, and thou haſt afflicted me with all thy waves.* So little comfort had theſe holy men though they were eminent in grace. It is true of many dear children of God, what was ſaid of the Apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt; *Whither I go* (ſaith Chriſt) *ye know, and the way ye know*: To which ſpeech of Chriſt, *Thomas* anſwers in the next verſe, *Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the way?* *Auguſtine* doth thus reconcile this, *They did know whither Chriſt went, but they durſt not once believe that they had ſuch knowledge, they did not know their own knowledge*: The expreſſions of Chriſt were different from thoſe words of *Thomas*, the Lord Jeſus ſpake as it was; and *Thomas* ſpake as he thought. The Apoſtles had grace, and yet wanted the comfort and aſſurance of it. I will not inſtance here of the Lord Jeſus, who though he was full of grace and truth, yet he wanted comfort when he was in that bitter agony, and cryed out, *My God, my God, why*

John 14. 4, 5. expounded and reconciled. *Aug.*

why hast thou forsaken me? Indeed in the new Testament there are not so many instances of those that wanted the comfort of their graces, as we finde in the Old Testament. And the reason is this, Profession at the first publishing and promulgation of the Gospel, met with so many and such sharp afflictions, that God did indulge them, and made *their inward graces to abound, as their outward sufferings did abound.* These instances may suffice to prove that it is truth, believers who are strong in grace, yet may want the comfort of their graces. 2 Cor. 1. 4.

2. To give you some grounds of this, the reasons may be drawn, either 1. From God; Or 2. From our selves. Or 3. From the devil.

1. Reason is from the Lord, to with-hold from them to whom he hath given grace the comfort of their grace.

1. To manifest his divine authority and absolute soveraignty over his people. As the natural light of the day, and darkness of the night are at Gods dispose; so also is this spiritual light of comfort, and the darkness of a deserted and dejected spirit. God gives divine and spiritual consolations out of the goodness of his will, and withdraws them, to shew the absoluteness and soveraign liberty of his Will.

2. To let his people know, that comfort is not essential to holiness, neither inseparably and necessarily belonging to grace. Though there cannot be

true peace, where there is no grace; yet there may be true grace, where there is no peace.

3. God in the dispensation both of grace and comfort, shews himself a free and gracious Agent; and all our graces which God works in us, are meerly from Gods grace to us. He will give comfort when and to whom he pleaseth, but still as a reward of his own free grace, the comfort of a pardon. The comfortable knowledge of our pardon is as well from Gods free grace as the pardon it self; and therefore God suspends the comfort of grace to make us looke up to him for it. When thou repentest, God gives a pardon, but therein he rewards his owne work in thee. To give a pardon or sense of a pardon is an act of meer liberality in God.

4. God doth this to put a difference between heaven and earth. Heaven is a place for comfort, earth for duty: earth is for the getting of grace, heaven for the rewarding of grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ, like the good Master of the Feast, reserves the best for last. The sons of Nobles, when they travel into forraign parts, have no more allowances then what will accommodate their travels, the inheritance is reserved for them, when they come to their fathers house: So believers, who are strangers and pilgrimes here, they have so much grace and comfort as befits their passage to heaven; but they have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, but is reserved in the heavens.

heavens. God thinks it not fit to give constant comforts in an inconstant world, nor full comforts in an empty world, nor lasting comforts in a transitory world.

2. Reason may be taken from our selves, and that in many regards, that have much grace, yet may have but a little comfort; and this may spring from a threefold root in us;

1. From something that is meerly natural in us.

2. From something that is spiritual and good.

3. From something that is evil in us.

1. This may arise from the prevalency of a natural melancholy in the body, whereby the understanding may be darkned, the fancy troubled, reason perverted, and the soul sadned. Melancholy is the mother of discomfort, and the nurser of doubting. It was (as some think) depth of melancholy that prevailed upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, that he did not know, whilest under the power of that distemper whether he was a man or a beast: And in the like manner may this bodily melancholy so far distemper thy soul, that thou who hast grace, yet mayest not know whether thou art a childe of God, or a childe of the devil. It is no more wonder to see a melancholy man doubt and question his spiritual condition, then it is to see a childe cry when he is beaten, or to heare a sick man groan. You may silence a melancholy man when you are not able to comfort him, and

though you may resolve his doubts and scruples by evident and convincing answers and arguments, yet let but such a man retire alone, and brood over his melancholy thoughts, by the prevalency of this perturbing humour, all is forgotten, and he is as unsatisfied, as if you had said nothing to him. And you may perceive, that it is the power of melancholy, that is the cause of a mans distemper, when he is very much troubled, and yet can give no distinct account of any particular thing that doth trouble him.

2. This discomfort often ariseth from that which is good in us, *viz.* from that holy jealousie and tenderness of conscience, which makes a childe of God suspect and inquire into his condition: and though he have true grace, and much grace, yet he is afraid lest all be but a delusion; in such cases the soul doth so pore on sin and infirmities, that it cannot see its own evidences. A tender conscience is more apt to be dejected in the sight of sinne, then to be comforted in the sense of grace, and the reason of this is, because sin doth more directly fall under the cognizance of our conscience, especially a natural conscience. *The works of the flesh are manifest*, but the fruits of grace and of the spirit are not so easily discerned.

Gal. 5. 17.

3. This discomfort usually springs from a root of bitternesse, even in the best of Gods children, and that whereby God doth punish the sins of his people. 1. *Their*

1. *Their quenching the motions of the Spirit.* If you grieve the Spirit of God, it is just with God to grieve your spirits: you never send Gods Spirit sad to heaven, but God may make sad your spirits on earth.

Res delicata est, spiritus Dei ità nos tractat, sicut tractatur.

2. Sleightinesse and fearlessenesse of heart towards God. When children grow saucy, peremptory and malapert before their parents, 'tis no wonder if a fathers frown correct not their irreverence. Most of those who lie uncomfortably under sense of displeasure of God, may thank themselves for it, they have provoked God by their bearing themselves too much upon his love, and growing secure and fearlesse to offend God. God loves to have his children come near him in an holy confidence that he is their father, but yet to keep their distance by humble reverence.

3. Another sin that God punishes in his children, by withholding comfort from them that are strong in grace, is their superciliousnesse, contempt and uncompassionateness towards others that are but weak in grace. God own people are very much to blame herein, in rigour and unmercifulnesse towards those that are weak in the faith, despising all that are inferiour to them in gifts and graces, whereby they often *break the bruised reed, and quench the smoaking flax*, and want bowels of pitty and tenderness towards their brethren. To take down pride, God often brings such, even his own peo-

ple, to be low in comfort; and it is but just that they should want comfort, who have neglected to comfort and cherish those that were weak in grace.

4. A growing cold and lazy, and heedlesse in holy duties. If we put off God without true service, God may justly put us off without true comfort. This rule holds in spiritual affairs, *He that will not work, shall not eat.* If we abate in the sanctifying work of the Spirit, it is but just that God withhold the comforting work of the Spirit. *The sluggard* saith *Solomon, hath poverty enough*, so if we grow lazy and sluggish in holy duties, it is just that our stock of comfort do decay. Though holy duties do not merit comforts, yet comfort usually riseth and falls according to our diligence in duties. True grace is never so apparent to, and sensible in the soul, as when it is in action; and therefore want of exercise must needs cause want of comfort. As fire in the flint is never seen or felt, till it be struck out by the Steel: so is grace and the comfort of grace, never so sensible as when it is exercised much in holy duties.

5. Any one sin indulged by, or concealed in the conscience, is enough to marre all your comfort. Concealed guilt contracts horrour. The Candle will never burn clear whilest there is a thief in it. Sin in the conscience is like *Ionah* in the ship, which causeth a tempest, that the conscience is like a

troubled sea whose waters cannot rest: or it is like a mote in the eye, which causeth a perpetual trouble while it is there: or like the winde gathered in the caverns of the earth, makes earthquakes and terrible eruptions. It is just with God, that *a mans own iniquities should correct him, and his back-sliding should reprove him.* Concealed guilt, though it may not bring a childe of God to hell, yet for a time it may bring hell into his conscience. So that by all these particulars we may see, that if our comforts be abated, we may thank our selves for it. Jer. 2. 19.

3 Reason is taken from the restlesse rage and malice of Satan, who when he cannot do the greater, will do the lesse: and if he cannot damn thy soul, he will labour all he can to disquiet thy conscience. The devill aims principally to make us walk sinfully, and if not so, then uncomfortably: if he cannot make us live without God and Christ, and grace in the world, then he indeavours to make us live beside the comfort of our grace. And hence it is, that many dear children to God, who have truth and strength of grace in them, yet hearkning too much to Satan, live beside the comfort of their grace. Pro. 14. 14.

3 But what shall I do, that want the comfort of thy grace, to procure it, that so I may have comfort answerable to grace? Quest. 3.

1. Live more in the exercise of grace; and and that is the ready way, not only to in- Answ. 1.

crease grace, but to obtain the comfort of grace. It was the Apostolical salutation, *Grace and Peace be multiplied.* If grace be multiplied, (and that it will by the exercise of it) then peace will also be multiplied. *The work of Righteousnesse shall be peace, and the effect of Righteousnesse, quietnesse and assurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*

Isa. 32. 17.

Psal. 119. 165.

Answ. 2. 2. Leave no sin unrepented of; take heed of guilt of sin lying on the conscience; take away the thief out of the candle, and it will burn clear. *If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far from thee, and let not wickednesse dwell in thy tabernacles; for thou shalt then lift up thy face without spot, yea thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not feare.* Behold now (saith Iob) *I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified*; the more ordered our wayes are, the more steddy and full are our comforts, the more sin in the soul, the lesse comfort in that soul.

Job 11. 14, 15.

Job 13. 18.

Answ. 3. 3. Call to minde former experiences that thy soul hath had of God. Thus did *David*, when by reason of the discomfort of his soul, he cried out, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Oh my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of* Jordan, *and of the* Hermonites, *that is*, I will remember thee, and what thou didst at *Jordan*, when thou didst dry up the river, and thy people passed on dry land into *Canaan. And I will remember the land of the* Hermonites,

Psal. 42. 5, 6

that

that is, what thou didst unto *Og* King of *Bashan*, and to *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, for *Hermon* was part of the Countrey of those Kings. So the Psalmist was under great discomfort, when he cried, *Will the Lord cast me off for ever? Is his mercy clean gone from me, &c.* But he recovers himself out of that sad case by remembring former experiences, for so he addes, *vers.* 12. *I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old, I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.* Past experience should be present incouragements. Josh. 12. 1. Ps. 77. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.

4. Attribute to God the glory of his own grace, and this is the way to enjoy the comfort of our grace. Say with the Church, *Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory.* It will be just with God to deny you the comfort of grace, if you deny him the glory of his grace. Want of comfort is Gods Physick, to cure our souls of spiritual pride: and humble thankfulnesse for the least grace, is the way to enjoy the comfort of all our graces. *Answ.* 4. Ps. 115. 1.

5. Spend more time in cherishing thy comforts then in questioning of them. It is the fault of some Christians, to spend more time in fruitlesse complaints of the want of comfort, then in faithful indeavours after comfort in Gods way. There are those who are more inquisitive how they lost their comforts, then careful how to recover them; and so indeed they weaken their own hands, but *Answ.* 5.

but do ſtrengthen the hands of Satan.

A fourth general propounded in the ſolution of this Caſe, was this: What may be the comfortable conſiderations which may be gathered from the truth delivered, *viz.* That ſtrong Chriſtians may be but weak in comfort? Now the handling of this laſt, will be an application of the other three particulars, by way of conſolation to thoſe that may perhaps now have ſtrong grace, but weak comfort.

Conſolat. 1. The godly are never without the ground of comfort, though they may be without the ſenſe of comfort. Though they may be without preſent feeling, yet they do not want real cauſe of conſolation. They have an undoubted right to comfort, though not a clear ſight of comfort. A childe may have right to an inheritance, though he be not able to demonſtrate and prove his right. Perhaps a man cannot read his evidences for his land, and yet thoſe evidences give him a right to his lands: So it is with a childe of God, he hath comfort ſowen, though perhaps he cannot preſently reap it. *Light is ſowen for the righteous, and joy for the upright of heart.* As it was with *Hagar* in the wilderneſſe of *Beer-ſheba*, her water was ſpent in the bottle, and ſhe caſt her childe away from her, becauſe ſhe could not endure to ſee him die; ſhe lift up her voice and wept that ſhe and her child ſhould both miſerably periſh by thirſt, and yet there was a Well of water

water hard by her, but she saw it not: so it is with many a poor soule, who are athirst for comfort, and (as they think) ready to perish, and yet there is a Well of water of life and comfort fast by, but they want the eye of faith to see it. And this is a great comfort, that a child of God, though he may want comfort, yet he hath right unto comfort, in that he hath truth of grace in him. Gen. 12. 16 17.

2. At that time when God withholds comfort from thee, yet he doth really love thee. Jesus Christ doth sometimes serve his children, as *Joseph* served his brethren. He spake roughly to them, and he put them in prison, and yet *Joseph* did dearly love his brethren, and his bowels did yern towards them. Thus Jesus Christ, his real love is the same to his children at all times, though the manifestation of it may not be alwaies alike; *Joseph* knew his brethren, though his brethren did not know him. *The Lord knows who are his*, though those that are his perhaps do not know that they are so. Jesus knew *Mary*, though she did not know him. Joh. 20. 15.

There may be as much mercy to us in withdrawing of comfort, as in the giving of comfort. God many times in wrath lets a man be filled with the ungrounded comfort of supposed grace. Oh (beloved) it is farre better to want comfort then grace. Many a man that hath no true grace, yet hath seeming comfort; but a child of God is often without comfort, that he may examine and exercise

exercise his grace, and so at last enjoy a wel-grounded joy, and a wel-bottom'd consolation. Grace is the best foundation of spirituall consolation.

XII. Sermon At Lawrence Jury, London. April 20. 1651.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

Be strong in the grace of God that is in Christ Jesus.

I Have already handled four cases of conscience, concerning strength of grace, *viz.*

1. *Whether strong temptations may be consistent with strength of grace?*
2. *Whether strong corruptions may consist with the strength of grace?*
3. *Whether a man may be strong in grace, and and yet want those strong affections which he had at his first conversion?*
4. *Whether a man may have strength of grace, and yet want the comfort of his grace?*

I shall proceed now to a fifth Case of Conscience, *viz.*

Case 5. *Whether a man may be said to have strength of grace, who hath but weak gifts?*

In the opening of which Case I shall thus proceed:

1. I wil premise some propositions.
2. I shall positively resolve the Case.
3. And then give you some practicall inference, by way of Application.

Ile begin with the first, namely the Posi-

tions

tions, and they are these four following:

This first Position is this, That though all believers they have the same Spirit, yet God in his wisdom thinks it fit they shal not have the same gifts. *There are* (saith the Apostle) *diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.* As it is with flowers, there is not the same smell but different smels to different flowers, and yet all their sents have the same influence from above; and as it is with instruments of musick, there are divers sounds in the Organ, but the same breath doth cause the severall sounds: So in the Church of God, though there is the same influence of the Spirit of God, yet not the same measure of gifts in each member of the Church. *Posit.* 1. 1 Cor. 12.

The second Position is this, that diversity of gifts is not to be ascribed to mans industry, diligence or education, but to the free pleasure and dispensation of God. It is true, much may be ascribed to study, and industry, and diligence in a way of gifts, which was the ground of the Apostles exhortation, *Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, &c. and meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* The Apostle speaks there of profiting in ministeriall gifts: which gifts, diligence and study doe much advantage and promote: yet although we were all equall in study and diligence, there would be a diversity in our gifts, lest men should vaunt of their industry in acquiring gifts, and there- *Posit.* 2. 1 Tim. 4. 13. Ver. 15.

by

by exclude Gods bounty in bestowing them, Psal. 127. 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* (saith *Hilder-saw*) *Suppose that two men were to read the same books, and to study the same matter every day, yet the one may be a dunce, and a man of low gifts, and the other may have rare parts and excellent endowments; this is to shew who we are beholding to, that is God, whose dispensation of gifts are many and variously bestowed.* Hence it is the Apostle telleth us, *That all these gifts worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*; so that though one man differ from another in gifts, yet it is God that maketh him to differ.

Psal. 137. 1

1 Cor. 12. 11.

Posit. 3. The third Position is this, That a man may be excellent in one gift, and yet defective in other gifts, one man shall not have all; this is very observable by instances you have in Scripture. The first instance is between *Paul* and *Barnabas*; if you look unto *Paul*, his gift was the gift of utterance, and freedom of speech, insomuch that at *Lystra* *Paul* was taken for *Mercury* the God of Eloquence, because he was the chiefe Speaker; and though it is said of *Paul*, that *he was rude of speech*, that is, not as if it were so indeed, but in the opinion and conceit of the *Corinthians*, who being seduced by false teachers, hearkned to their disparagements of *Paul*. *Paul* he was a most eloquent man, and had much of the gift of utterance, but now *Barnabas* did excel *Paul* in another gift, to com-

Act. 14. 11.

2 Cor. 11. 6

Act. 4. 36.

fort

fort those who were troubled in conscience; he was a *son of Consolation*, to comfort troubled consciences. So likewise in the case of *Peter* and the other Apostles; Divines gather from Christs commission to *Peter*, singling him out, when he said, *Peter, feed my Lambs; Peter, lovest thou me?* The Reason that some Expositors give, why *Peter* was singled out, was this; because *Peter* had an excellent gift in preaching; and in feeding the Lambs of Christ, that is, weak Believers. Moreover, it is said of *James* and *John*, that they were called *Sonnes of Thunder*, as having a more powerfull gift from God, to terrifie and awake a sinners conscience, then *Peter* and other Apostles had. So that though some of the Apostles had most excellent gifts, yet some of them excelled others in some one gift.

Act. 11. 24.

Joh. 22. 15.

Mar. 3. 17. *Beaurges.*

The fourth Position is, That there are Cases, wherein men may have great gifts, but weak grace. God is pleased sometimes to carry mens gifts very high, when their graces have not a proportionable elevation, and the reason is, because gifts are for the good of others, for the edification of the Church of God, and not for the good of a mans self only; *They were wanting in no gift, and had all knowledge*; and yet when he mentions their graces, he saith, *I could not speak to you as spirituall, but carnal*; They outstrip other Churches in gifts, yet they came short of other Churches in grace. Such was the Church of *Laodicea*

Posit. 4.

1 Cor. 5. 7. compared with 1 Cor. 3. 1.

Rev. 3. 11. *Laodicea*, she was rich in gifts, and poor in grace. Now there are foure Cases wherin men may have strong gifts, and yet but little grace.

Case 1. 1. When mens notions are clear and strong, but mens experiences and affections but low and weak, to have more expression then impressions; to be like the Moon, that though from the waine it growes big, and increases to the full; yet it increases only in light, and not in heat: So men when they meerly increase in light of notions and speculations, and not in heat of affection towards God, and the practical part of Christianity; and it is to be feared, that much of the Religion of these times is of this stamp, it is more in notion then motion, more in talking then walking, more in parts then grace.

Case 2. 2. When thy gifts are not influential upon thy life. Look at it is in that disease of the Rickets, that children are liable to, they may grow big in the head, and yet decay in the lower parts: So there are some (as it hath been shown) who have the disease of the spiritual Rickets, they do grow big in the head, big in gifts, and yet decay in their vitals, decay in grace and the exercise of it.

Case 3. 3. When their gifts do but tend to the promotion of division in the Church, and pride in their own hearts. This was discovered in the Church of *Corinth*, they came behinde in no gift; but see what he saith in

1 Cor. 1. 7.

vers.

Verſ. 11. *For it hath been declared unto me of you (my brethren) by them which are of the houſe of* Cloe, *that there are contentions among you.* And then in *verſ.* 12. *Now this I ſay, that everyone of you ſaith, I am of* Paul, *I of* Apollos, *I of* Cephas, *and I of Chriſt*, they were carnal as to grace, and walked as men, though they were high in gifts, and when gifts engender ſtrife in the Church and pride in a mans own heart, and when they doe elevate and puffe up the heart with vaine and high conceits; this is an argument they are but meere gifts. The *Corinthians* were in every thing inriched by God; in all utterance and in all knowledge, ſo that they came behind in no gift, they had abundance of knowledge, but *knowledge puffeth up, charity edifieth.*

Verſ. 11.

Verſ. 12.

1 Cor. 15. 7.

1 Cor. 8. 1.

4. When gifts are encreaſed meerly by vertue of continuall ſtudy and induſtry, when gifts proceed meerly from ſtrength of natural parts, advantaged by education, ſtudy and diligence; if gifts do meerly proceed from that fountain, there may be much gifts, but little grace. The greateſt ſchollers are not alwaies the beſt men, the reaſon is, becauſe their gifts are gotten by induſtry and diligence; their gifts may be high, when their graces are low.

Caſe 4.

The fifth Poſition, there are caſes wherein men may decay and be weak in gifts, and yet may be ſaid to have ſtrength of grace.

Poſit. 5.

1. If it proceed meerly from a naturall,

Caſe 1.

not a ſinfull defect. If weak gifts proceed from ſinfull defects, it argues grace is but weak, as if it proceeds from negligence, from ſloth, from careleſneſſe to attend upon Ordinances, from idleneſſe in not reading, in not meditating, in not praying, not uſing holy conference, then grace decayes with gifts, theſe are ſinful defects; but now if gifts proceed meerly from naturall defects, as a man of a ſhallow capacity, of a ſlow ſpeech, of a bad memory, of a weakly body, that either through ſickneſſe or old age the body is weakned, in that there are natural decayes in the body, becauſe the putting forth of gifts depends upon the temperature and diſpoſition of the body. As it is with an inſtrument of muſick that is out of tune, it makes no melody though the inſtrument be good: So a body out of tune, hath not that uſe of, or putting out of gifts. As it is with an old Preacher, his gifts may decay when he is an old man, that he may not have ſuch freedom of ſpeech, ſuch clearneſſe of judgement, ſuch ſtrength of memory; as the body decayes, the gift of Elocution wil decay, and his memory may decay, that he may not be ſo ready in delivering the Word, but yet he may have as great ability in preaching, yea more experience, more ſolid judgement, and more clear underſtanding in the myſteries of the Goſpel, then a young man can have: ſo it is with Chriſtians, their gifts may decay, as the temper of the body decayes; as it is with a

Muſician.

Musician, when he is a young man his joints being more pliable, playes more nimbly and melodiously upon an instrument of musick, but when he comes to be an old man he cannot play so nimbly and melodiously, his joynts being stiffe, but yet he hath more skill then a young man hath. When this doth not proceed from sinful defects, but from natural defects, then may a mans grace be strong, though his gifts and parts be weak.

2. If you want those externall advantages to further and promote the growth of gifts, as for example, A Christian that follows an ordinary trade, which carries a Water-tankard on his shoulder, he may attain more brokennesse of heart, more humility and self-denial, more experience of the goodness of God toward his soule, and of the method of God, then he who perhaps is in some great, honourable, and eminent imployment: But that Christian who hath this mean imployment, and such poore education, shall not attain those gifts, that others have attained who have greater advantages. As it is with a Scholler that hath been divers yeers at the University, he hath those external advantages, as education and literature, that his gifts and parts may be much increased; when perhaps a poore man that follows the Plough, may attain to more grace, and more acquaintance with the wayes of God. Now if such a man have not so many gifts as others, it is not his sin: God doth not require more then he gives. *Case 2.*

Caſe 3. 3. If you have not a calling to uſe or put forth the exerciſe of your gifts. Your gifts may decay, though grace do not decay. Gifts are encreaſed by exerciſe, the leſſe they are exerciſed the more they decay: if thou haſt not an opportunity to exerciſe thy gifts as in former times, to pray in company, to uſe holy conference, as in former times thou hadſt; in ſuch a caſe a Chriſtian who is ſtrong in grace may grow weaker in gifts.

Caſe 4. 4. If what you want in gifts you make up in humility. Strength of grace is not to be meaſured by notions and ſpeculations in the head, but by humility in the heart; therefore if thy gifts be weak, if thy humility be great, thou haſt ſtrength of grace: the leſſe bloſſomes there are on the branches, the more ſap there is in the root. He that hath great parts, and is proud of them, it is much to be feared hath leſſe grace, then that man who hath but few gifts, and low parts; but in the ſenſe of their own weakneſſe, hath low and ſelf-denying thoughts of himſelf.

Caſe 5. 5. Laſtly, if what you want in gifts you make up in your practice, by a holy and conſcionable walking. That Martyr that ſaid, *I cannot diſpute, but I can burn for the truth*, had more grace, then thoſe that could diſpute, but not burn.

The application of this Caſe is onely for Caution, and I ſhall give you a threefold Caution.

Uſe 1.

1. Cau-

1 Caution. Take heed ye be not proud of the greatest measure of gifts you have; there is nothing in the world that a man is so apt to be proud of as his gifts; a man is not so apt to be proud of grace, because he hath a principle to check his pride, but he is apt to be proud of his gifts; a man is not so apt to be proud of outward endowments, as clothing, riches and the like, as he is apt to be proud of his gifts. Expositors that do handle the prophesie of *Ezekiel*, they say that *Ezekiel* is called ninety three times (*Thou son of man*) in that Prophesie; now there is no other Prophet that is mentioned in all the Bible, but onely one, which is called *The son of man*, and that is *Daniel*. Now expositors give this reason why he is called by this title, because he was a Prophet of the greatest gifts, and had the most glorious visions of all the other Prophets. Compare this Prophecy with *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Hosea*, or all the rest, yet *Ezekiels* prophesie is a more dark, mysterious, profound book. Now *Ezekiel* being a Prophet of the greatest gifts; God takes this care to keep his heart low, *Thou Son of man, Thou Son of man*, and all is to keep his heart low; which doth teach us thus much, that those that have great gifts, they ought to spend a great deal of time to keep their hearts humble and low, because there is a flatuous humour in our nature, whereby we are apt to swell and be puft up in the sense of our own gift. Dan. 8. 7.

2. Caution. Prize a little grace before a great measure of gifts; ye will prize a pearle though no bigger then a pea, more then a great heap of stones. There is great reason why we should prize a little grace before much gifts.

Reason 1. 1. Grace will last when gifts are withering. Blazing Comets will fall when the Star never falls; a falling Star is no Star but only a Comet: So the hypocrites may have a great blaze of their gifts, and yet may fall like Comets that hover in the aire. Grace is like a Star that keeps fixed in its orbe; there is a great deal of difference betwixt a painted face and a natural complexion, the painted face will not alwayes last, but natural complexion that will alwayes remain. Gifts are but paint, the ornament of the creature, but true grace which is as the natural complexion that will remain.

Reason. 2. 2. Prize a little grace before much gifts, because gifts will leave thee short of heaven. Christ told the learned Scribe, that he was *not far from the Kingdome of heaven*, but alas, for all his gifts and learning, he fell short of heaven. Mat. 7. 22. *Many will say to me*, (said Christ) *in that day, Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderous works.* You see it is observable, these men might pretend to high and great gifts, and yet they to whom God opened the secrets of his Kingdome, against them he shut the gates of heaven.

ven. A man may be a Preacher, and have the secrets of heaven opened to him, and yet have the gates of heaven shut against him. A man may attain the gift in Christs name to cast out devils, a great and a miraculous gift, and yet those men that cast out devils were themselves cast to devils. *We have done many wondrous works*, they that did wonders were made a wonder: they that had so much gifts came short of heaven, yea they *who may preach to others may themselves be cast away.*

3. Do not mistake strength of gifts to be strength of grace. Parents would not judge their children strong when their heads and breasts are big, and their feet but feeble; so you may grow big in your heads, in notions and speculations, in gifts, and yet feeble in practice of grace. Now that you may not mistake your selves, and may not be deceived; I'le shew you how you may know the difference betwixt those that have strong gifts, and those that have strong grace. In the generall take this: As Art resembles nature, so gifts resemble grace. Now there are four differences. 3. *Caut.*

1. As grace strengthens, corruption weakens. It is with grace and lusts as it was with the house of *Saul* and the house of *David*. As *Davids house grew stronger and stronger, so* Sauls *house grew weaker and weaker.* As the Ark was set up, *Dagon* was throwne down; the *Dagon* of corruption will be thrown down before the Ark of grace, and 1. *Difference.*

the Ark of the Covenant; But gifts may ſtrengthen, and yet corruptions never the weaker. Indeed gifts diſcover corruption, but we are not able to mortifie and ſubdue it. Gifts diſcover many corruptions, but mortifie none. Gifts take a cognizance of many a ſin, but never put a period to any. Men that have gifts are reſembled to the Moon, and men that have grace are reſembled to the Sun; the Moon hath an influence upon the water to make that move; to ebbe and flow: the Moon ſheds light upon all creatures, but no heat, to make thoſe creatures grow and ſpring: So a man of gifts may have light, but no heat to thoſe gifts to make grace to grow, and make ſin to fade and wither. Gracious men are like the Sun, that doth not only give light but heat, by the influence thereof things ſpring and grow out of the earth; the great parts of a gifted man, often occaſionally ſtrengthen his corruptions, but do not weaken them. *Auguſtine* could ſay, *Ignorant and illiterate men, they take heaven; when others with all their Schollerſhip go to hell.*

Surgunt indocti & rapiunt cœlum & nos cum doctrina noſtra perimus. Aug.

2. Where there is ſtrength of grace, there the heart is more humbled under the meaſures of grace received; the ſtronger the graces are, the more the heart is humbled. But ſtrength of parts in moſt men makes them proud and lofty. Empty veſſels make the greateſt noiſe, and ſo do ſhallow ſtreams: So men that have great gifts are often empty of grace, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. They are puft up with

2. Difference.

pride,

pride, who have more gifts then grace, and by the humility of the ſoule you may know whether that ſoule be ſtronger in grace then in gifts.

3. He looks more after the ſupply of the grace he wants, then in a way of contentment in the grace he hath. This argued *Paul* had much grace, when he thus ſpeaks, *I doe ſtrive after more and more grace, if by any means I might attain the reſurrection of the dead*, that is, I doe labour after perfection of grace, which thoſe ſhall have that are raiſed from the dead, and exalted in heaven, but now a man that hath gifts, is more apt to look what he hath then what he wanteth. Men of gifts are more apt to look upon their attainments then their imperfections, they look upon their gifts in a multiplying glaſſe, more then they are; and upon their failings in an extenuating glaſſe, leſſe then they are.

3. *Difference.*

Phil. 3. 13. expounded.

4. The more grace any one hath, the more communicative he is, that others may be partakers of the ſame grace. When the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the duties of husbands and wives, he would have them further one another in the way to heaven, *conſidering they are heires together of the grace of God.* Chriſt alſo ſpeaks to *Peter*, *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.* By Converſion is not meant Gods firſt act in bringing *Peters* ſoule home to Chriſt, but it is meant by an eſtabliſhing worke of grace, as if Chriſt ſhould have ſaid, *Peter*, now thy grace is weak, and it will be

Munera non vulnera oſtendit.

4. *Difference.*

1 Pet. 3. 7. Luk. 22. 32 33.

be weaker by thy fall, but when thou art recovered from thy fall, and deniall of thy Master, then ſtrengthen thy brethren, labour to ſtrengthen the graces of other men, when thy graces are ſtrong, and thy ſtrength recovered, and this is a very good evidence that thou haſt not onely grace, but ſtrength of grace thy ſelfe, when thou art carefull to ſtrengthen others: but ſuch as have gifts only, with little or no grace, they are loath to communicate their gifts unto others, they would willingly monopolize their gifts, and grudge to impart them to others, they would not have other men have the like gifts with themſelves, leſt their glory ſhould be darkned. They are not of *Iohn Baptiſts* mind, who cared not though he decreaſed, ſo as Chriſt encreaſed, but rather they are like to one *Aſpendius* a skilfull Muſician, who would never play on his inſtrument before any of his profeſſion, leſt they ſhould learn his skill. This is a notable diſcovery whether thou haſt ſtrong grace, or ſtrong gifts only, which thou mayſt know by thy willingneſſe and readineſſe to communicate unto others, what God hath imparted unto thee.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

—My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

XIII. Sermon at *Lawrence Jury London.* April 20. 1651.

YOu have heard the first Doctrine opened, *viz. That believers are not to be satisfied in weak measures of grace already received, but ought to endeavour to attain greater strength of grace.* I shall now proceed to the improvement of this point by making some application of it; and I shall direct the use to two sorts of Christians.

1. To such as are weak in the faith.

2. To such as are strong and grown Christians.

Use 1. 1. With weak believers I would leave these directions and consolations following.

1. It is your wisdom to looke more after the truth of your grace, then after the measure of it. It is an errour in many Christians, especially young Converts, that they bring their graces rather to the ballance then to the touch-stone, they weigh them when they should try them. *Peter* being asked by Christ, *Simon, lovest thou me more then these?* he answers not about the measure of his love, but about the truth of his love, *Lord, I love thee, and thou knowest that I love thee.* It is not the quantity or measure, but the nature and essence

Joh. 21. 15.

ſence of grace, which is mainly conſiderable. If thou haſt grace in truth and reality, it will encreaſe; be ſure thy grace be right, and as the light ſhineth more and more to the perfect day, and as the nature of the leaven is, that it doth ſpread through the whole lump, ſo is grace, it is of a ſpreading and encreaſing nature; and therefore be carefull thy grace for nature and for eſſence be true, and for the meaſur eof it, it wil then encreaſe.

2. In finding out the truth of grace, we muſt not meaſure it ſo much by actions as affections and holy diſpoſitions of the heart: the bent, frame, and tendencies of the heart are the beſt diſcoverers of grace in the heart. When a Chriſtian caſts up all the ſtock of grace he hath, he wil finde that it doth conſiſt more in deſires then endeavours, & more in endeavours and attempts to perform holy duties, then in performance it ſelf. Natural life is more diſcernable by the heat, then by the colour: a Painter may counterfeit the one, but not the other. When the Lord Jeſus is deſcribing the beauty of his Spouſe, he doth not ſay, How faire are thy looks, but, *How fair is thy love.* Cant. 4. 10.

3. Be not diſcouraged, though men of glorious gifts fall away: for the pooreſt Chriſtian that hath but the ſmalleſt meaſure of grace ſhal never fall away. The gifts of a Formaliſt may quickly wither, for they have their root in nature: but the graces of a true Chriſtian ſhal never periſh, becauſe they have their root in

in Christ, *A Christians life is hid with Christ*, hid in him as in a root, as in the fountain of life. A painted face may soon fade, so doth not a true and natural complexion; the varnish of a formal hypocrite is soon wash't out, but when true grace like a colour in grain, hath grown habitual in the soul, it is not removeable; sooner will the Sun discard its own beams, then Christ will desert and destroy the least measure of true grace, which is a beam from that *Sun of Righteousnesse*. Col. 3 3.

3. Improve your little grace well; this is the way to have more. *To him that hath shall it be given*, i.e. more shall be given: God never gave any man a talent to hide it in a napkin. The least measure of grace is accountable for. God is improved, Luke 19.1

1. When we ascribe all the glory of grace unto God; as he said right, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*. Thy pound, and not my pains; We should do all to the praise of the glory of Gods grace. If we give God the glory of his grace, he will give us the comfort of our grace, and the increase of it. Luk. 19. 10

2. When for the edification and building up of others in their most holy faith: to do good to others is the best way to get more good our selves: The more the Well is drawn, the more water comes, and the better the water is; so the more thy grace is exercised, the more grace thou wilt have, and the sweeter will the comfort be of thy grace.

5. To weak Chaistians. Do not deny the truth

truth of grace in your ſouls, becauſe you cannot finde the ſtrength of grace in your ſouls. A poor weak man in a Conſumption cannot lift up ſuch a weight, nor can he bear ſuch a burden as a man in ſtrength and health can do, yet he hath life as well as the ſtrongeſt man in the world. It may be *day* when it is not *noon*, thou mayſt in reſpect of ſpiritual eſtate, have the ſtrength of a *child*, though not the ſtrength of a *man*. It is not only an act of *unthankfulneſſe* to God, but alſo of *uncharitableneſſe* to a mans own ſoul, to conclude a nullity of grace from the weakneſſe of it.

6. Look not ſo much on your ſins, but look upon your grace alſo, though weak grace. Weak Chriſtians look more on their ſins then on their graces, yet God looks on their graces, and overlooks their ſins and infirmities: ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, *Ye have heard of the patience of* Job. He might alſo have ſaid, *Ye have heard of the impatiency of* Job, but God reckons of his people, not by what is bad in them, but by what is good in them. Mention is made of *Rahabs* entertainment of the ſpies, but no mention is made that ſhe told the lie when ſhe did ſo, that which was well done was mentioned to her praiſe, and what was amiſſe is buried in ſilence, or at leaſt is not recorded againſt her and charged upon her. He that drew the picture of *Alexander* with his ſcarre on his face, drew him with his finger on his ſcarre. God layes the

Jam. 5. 13.

the finger of mercy upon the scarres of our sins. Oh it is good serving such a Master, who is ready to reward the good we do, and is ready to forgive and passe by what is amisse; and therefore thou that hast but a little grace, yet remember God will have his eye on that little grace. *He will not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reed.* Mat. 12.20

7. Learn this for thy comfort, that though thou hast but a little grace, yet that little grace shall not be extinguished by thy strong corruption, but at last it shall over-master your corruptions. What was said of *Esau* and *Jacob*, *the one shall be stronger then the other, and the elder shall serve the younger*, and so it came afterwards to passe in the time of *Jehosaphat*, when there was no King in *Edom*; That may be fitly applyed to the affairs of the soul, the elder shal serve the younger; corruption in the soul is elder then grace in the soul, and corruption is so opposite to grace, that it labours for the extinction of grace, but this sparke shall live in the midst of the sea of corruption, till at last that great deep shall be made dry; and the house of *David* shall at last quite put down the house of *Saul*, the Name of the Lord will perform this. And therefore thou that art but a weak Christian, learn to stay thy self on the Name of the Lord, till judgement be brought forth into victory. Gen. 25.23 1 King 22. 47.

2. *Use* of this doctrine is unto strong believers, such as have attained unto a higher form

forme of grace in the ſchool of Chriſt.

2. Though you are ſtrong in grace, yet remember it is not the grace of God in you, but the free grace of God towards you, by which you are juſtified. It is not our inherent righteouſneſſe, but the imputed righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt that is our Juſtification. Oh conſider, you that have moſt grace, what would become of you were it not for free grace? Free grace is the ſureſt and only refuge for a ſoul to flie unto. God can finde matter of condemnation againſt you not only for your worſt ſins, but your beſt duties. The beſt Chriſtian hath no reaſon to venture his ſoul on the beſt thought that ever he conceived, nor on the moſt holy duty that ever he performed, nor on the higheſt grace that ever he exerciſed. A famous inſtance hereof we have in *Nehemiah*, who had much grace, and did much for God, his people, his houſe, his cauſe, yet prayes after all this, *Spare me according to the greatneſſe of thy mercy.* Intimating that God might finde therein matter enough to ruine him, if God did not ſpare him for his mercies ſake. So *Paul* in the diſcharge of his Miniſtery, proceeded with ſo much uprightneſſe, that he ſpeaks thus of himſelf, *I know nothing by my ſelfe, yet am I not hereby juſtified.* He knew that all the grace and excellency, and uprightneſſe in him would not make him righteous in the ſight of God. We read of *Iehoſaphat*, that when he had muſtered up all

Nehem. 13. 22.

1 Cor. 4. 4.

2 Chro. 11. 19.

all his ſtrength, which was very great, for he had *eleven hundred thouſand men in his militia*, yet he goes to God, and prayes, *Lord, we have no might or power againſt theſe multitudes, and we know not what to do, only our eyes are up to thee*: So when a Chriſtian hath muſtered up all the ſtrength of his grace, and conſiders the great power of his corruptions which do ſet themſelves againſt him, he had beſt go to God and ſay, Lord I have no power againſt theſe many and great corruptions, but my eyes are to thy grace that thou mayſt help me. As in a pair of Compaſſes, one foot is fixed in the Center, whilſt the other turns about the circumference: ſo muſt the ſoul fix and ſtay it ſelfe on Chriſt, whileſt it is exerciſed about holy duties. Though Chriſt (as I formerly mentioned,) commended many parts of the Spouſe, yet not her hands, to teach us, that all the Spouſe could do, could not make her amiable in the eyes of Chriſt, nor the Spouſes working for Chriſt, but Chriſts work in the Spouſe made her beautiful. Oh it is very hard through ſtrength of grace to abound, in the work of the Lord, and yet keep the heart humble: And therefore

1 Chro. 11. 19.

2 Chro. 10. 12.

Cant. 4. 1. to 8.

2. Conſider, they that have moſt grace, yet have great cauſe to be humbled, and that in many reſpects.

1. Thou haſt not ſo much grace and perfection as once thou hadſt: Once man was beautified and beſpangled with many glori-

ous perfections before the fall, it might have been said of man, that he *was perfect as his heavenly father was perfect*, for God made man upright, that is, perfect, nothing was wanting then to make man both an happy and holy creature; but alas, the image of God in us is now obliterated and defaced.

Phil.3.12, 13.

2. He that hath most grace, hath not so much as he shall have in heaven. *Not that I am perfect already, but I forget those things that are behind, and I presse forward unto those things that are before, yea I presse* (saith the Apostle) *toward the mark of the price of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.* We read under the law of severall things that were to be a cubit and half high and broad, it being an imperfect measure, it was to note, that no man in this life hath an exactnesse and perfection, the uttermost that is attainable by us in this life, is but imperfect. In this life there is a *plus ultra*, something still to be attained in religion, but in heaven men shall be *perfect*. We shall in heaven *be like to Jesus Christ*, whom though we now see but darkly and in a glasse, then we shall see him as he is.

Ex.25.10.

The errour of the Familisticall Perfectists very pernicious.

Heb.12.23
1 Joh.3.2.

3. They that have much grace, yet should be humbled, for there are those that have more grace then you, and yet have had lesse time and fewer advantages then you have; there are those that have gone before you much for strength of grace, and yet have come behind you for means of grace: there are those who were the last and are first, and before you.

Mat.20.16

4 Be-

4 Be humbled under much grace; for ye have not so much grace as you should have had, concerning the means of grace you have lived under. How many years have you been in the school of Christ, and yet what little proportionable progresse have you made in the knowledge of Jesus Christ? we may all blush to think what dunces we have been in the school of Christ. The trees of the garden should bear more fruit then the trees of the forrest: the *Fig-tree* therefore which was unfruitful, was the more intolerable, because it was in the garden, in the vineyard. What the Apostle complains of the Hebrews, we our selves may justly take up the complaint against our selves, that *For the time we ought to have been teachers, and yet have need that one teach us again what are the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* Luke 13.6, 7. Heb. 5.12.

5. They that have much grace, and are strong in grace, yet have cause to be humble, because its likely they had more grace and did more good heretofore then now; and who is there almost that is not decayed, that hath not in some degree or other *left their first love*? have you not had (I speak to grown and experienced Christians) more love and zeal to God, more hatred of sin, more griefe for sinne, more feare of offending God then now you have? are there not many that have and do expresse Rev. 2.5.

leſſe deſire after duty, leſſe fervency, leſſe frequency, leſſe delight in holy duties then formerly? Alas! how many through pride and ſpiritual improvidence, through neglect of Ordinances, and worldly mindedneſſe have much abated in their ſpiritual eſtate!

6. Be humbled, that though you be ſtrong in grace, yet you have many corruptions in you more ſtrong then many graces. More are our vain thoughts then our meditations, and more are the things we are ignorant of then the things we know. Corruption is ſtrong enough to keep grace low, but in the beſt grace is not ſtrong enough to bring corruption under. *When we would do good, evil is preſent and powerful with us*, to hinder us from doing of good: but when we are doing of evil, good is not preſent to hinder us from that evil: we are more in ſinning then in obeying. Our corruptions are like *Goliah* our graces as *David*. We exerciſe more kinds of ſins then graces; as in a field there are more briars and thorns then uſefull trees, and in a garden more unprofitable weeds then roſes and lilies; ſo in the ſouls of the beſt there are whole ſwarmes of vain, earthly and ſinful thoughts, when there are but very few holy and heavenly thoughts.

Quantum eſt quod neſcimus.

Rom 7.21.

7. Another argument why ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould be humble, is this, that though they may have grace, yet they are ſubject to fall into that ſin, which is moſt contrary to that grace wherein they are moſt eminent.

Abraham

Abraham was most eminent for faith; he is said *to be strong in faith*, he is called *the father of the faithfull*. *They which be of faith are blessed with faithfull* Abraham: and yet for all this *Abraham* fell into distrust of Gods providence and power, when he spake untruly, and *denied his wife*. So *Job* was renowned for his patience, *You have heard of the patience of Job*, (saith St. *James*,) and yet we read in the story of *Jobs* trials, that his impatiency did break out in many rash speeches and wishes. So *Moses* was eminently meek, it was said of him, *The man* Moses *was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth*. And yet it is said of him, *that his spirit was provoked, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips*: and you shall finde meek *Moses* thus expostulating with God himself, *I am not able to bear all the people alone, because it is too heavy for me, and if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of hand; and if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me not see my wretchednesse*.

Rom. 4. 20.
Gal. 3. 9.
Gen. 20. 2.
Jam. 5. 11.
Job 6. 9.
Num. 12. 3.
Ps. 106. 33.
Num. 11. 14, 15.

8. This further consideration may also humble us, that in the highest and greatest exercise of grace there is much mixture of sin. We may observe, that even those good actions, for which many of the People of God are recorded in Scripture, are yet blemish'd with some notable defect. *Rahab's* faith in entertaining the Spies, was blemish'd with this failing, in telling a lie concerning them. It was also good the Midwives did,

when they refuſed to obey that bloody decree of the King of *Egypt*, and would not kill the male-children of the Hebrews, and yet they miſcarried as ſome obſerve in their anſwer to the King, when they made their excuſe. Wee are apt to mingle ſin with the beſt action we do, and ſo apt to plough with an Oxe and an Aſſe; and our corruptions are apt to diſcover themſelves, even while we are upon the exerciſe our grace.

Exod. 1. 17, 19.

3. Let the ſtrong labour to be more ſtrong, that ſo they may be *ſtrengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſſe.* And therefore it is that the Apoſtle prayes for the *Romanes, that they may be filled by the God of hope, with all joy and peace in believing, that they might abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt*; and yet in the next verſe he told them, *I my ſelf am perſwaded of you (my Brethren) that ye are full of goodneſſe, and that ye are filled with all knowledge.* And as he prayes for the *Romanes*, upon the ſame termes he preſſeth the *Theſſalonians*, of whom he thus ſpeakes. *Now as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your ſelves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed you do it towards all the Brethren which are in all* Macedonia, *but we beſeech you, Brethren, that ye increaſe more and more. The righteous (ſaith Job) ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.*

Col. 1, 11.

Rom. 15. 13, 14.

1 Theſ. 4. 9 10.

Job 17. 9.

To

To quicken you hereunto, consider

1. *The more grace we have on Earth, the more glory we shall have in Heaven.* As God doth unequally dispense his gifts in this life, so accordingly he crowns. There are degrees of torments in hell, the hypocriticall Scribes and Pharisees, *who devoured widows houses, and for a pretence made long prayers*, are doomed by Christ himselfe to receive *greater damnation*, and that servant who *knew his Lords will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his wil, shall be beaten with many stripes.* Now if there are different degrees of torments in hell, then surely there are different degrees of glory in Heaven, and those according to different degrees of grace here on earth.

Sicut Deus sua dona in hac vita inæqualiter communicat, sic coronat. Bucha.

Mat. 23. 14.

2. It is of the nature of grace to grow and increase; and therefore if thou hadst grace, either in truth of it, or in strength of it, it wil certainly grow. Grace in Scripture is compared to a grain of mustard-seed, the least of seeds, which afterwards sprouts and springs so, as that it becomes the largest of plants. In the same chapter grace is compared unto leaven, which *being put into the heap of meale, leaveneth the whole*: so grace (as I touched before) in the heart, is of a spreading nature, and wil diffuse it selfe into all the parts, powers, and faculties of soule and body. Christians are therefore compared to the branches of a Vine, which of all trees grows most, and brings forth most fruit. A

Luk. 12. 47

Mat. 13. 31 32, 33.

Joh. 15. 1.

Picture doth not grow, but a living child wil grow.

3. Such as are ſtrong Chriſtians ſhould yet grow more and more, becauſe in this world there is no ſtint and meaſure ſet for ſpiritual growth: the *maximum quod ſic* of a Chriſtian, is this, he muſt grow in grace til his head reach up to heaven, til grace be perfected in glory.

4. Shall worldlings ſet no bounds to their deſires after wealth and land, and yet wilt thou take up with poore meaſures of grace for Religion? The ordinary anſwer of ignorant people is, What? muſt we be wiſer then our forefathers? and yet thoſe people would be richer then their forefathers were, and thoſe that have great wealth left them by their forefathers, yet are not ſatisfied with it unleſſe they increaſe their eſtate: let this ſhame that ſlothfulneſſe and ſupine negligence of many, who content themſelves with meaſures of grace.

Si dixiſti ſufficit periiſti.

5. And laſtly, conſider, that thoſe who were eminent for grace, in what eſteem were they in the Church of God, and with what honourable mention are they recorded in the Word of God; ſuch are remembred to be of note in the Church of God. See what an *Eulogium* the Holy Ghoſt gives *Job, that there was none like him in the earth.* God loves thoſe that are ſingularly and excellently good, an ordinary pitch doth not ſo pleaſe him. *What do ye more then others?* Solomon was

Rom. 16. 7. ἐπίσημοι.
Job 1. 8.
Mat. 5. 46.

ſo

so renowned for wisdome, that it is said, *That amongst many Nations there was no King like him*, that is, for wisdom. So *Hezekiah* was eminent for trusting in God, Who feared not to break in pieces the broken serpent, but trusted in God, *none like him of all the Kings of Judah*. And so eminent was the zeale of good *Josiah* after a thorough reformation, that he is also crowned with this commendation, *And like him was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soule, and with all his might*. By all which instances it is cleare, of what honourable esteem have the eminent particular graces of Gods servants been in the sight of the Lord.

τὶ περισσὸν ποιεῖτε. Nehem. 13 26.

2 King. 18. 4, 5.

2 King. 23. 25.

2 TIM. 2. 1.

—*My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

XIII. Sermon at *Lawrence Jury London*. April 20. 1651.

HAving in the last foregoing Sermons, treated of grace in its strength and growth, I am come to speak to this additional clause in the text, viz, *That is in Christ Jesus*: which passage is here inserted by the Apostle, that he might let *Timothy* know to whom he was beholding, for all the grace he had received, even unto Jesus Christ. In the tenth verse he speaks of *salvation that is in*

Christ

Christ Jesus; and here of grace that is in Christ Jesus: so note,

1. That Jesus Christ is the fountaine and foundation, both of grace and glory. Jesus Christ gives *grace*, and Jesus Christ gives also *salvation, with eternall glory*, Ver. 10.

2. That those who receive grace from Christ Jesus, shall also receive salvation by him, for there is an inseparable union between grace and glory.

The grace of God that is in Christ Jesus. Grace may be said to be in Christ

1. As a subject recipient, and so Christ is said to be *full of grace and truth; he had the Spirit without measure, it pleased the Father, that in him all fulnesse should dwel.*

John 1.14.
John 3.34.
Col. 1.19.

2. In *Christ Jesus*, as a fountain redundant over-flowing & ever-flowing to his people, *for of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace.*

John 1.16.

Again, when it is said that grace is in Christ Jesus, we must consider Christ

1. As God co-essential with the Father, and he is the Author and giver of grace, and of every good and perfect gift.

2. Consider him as Mediatour *God-man*, and so he is the purchaser and procurer of grace, and of all the blessings of the New Covenant, for *the blessing of Abraham commeth upon the Gentiles, ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, through Christ Jesus.* So that by this phrase, *In Christ Jesus*, there are three things implied.

Gal. 3.14. ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, *through Christ.*

1. That Jesus Christ is the Author and Giver of grace; he onely is the *Author and*

Heb. 12.

Finisher

Finisher of faith, and every grace in his people.

2. That Christ is the purchase of grace, so that all the grace that is bestowed upon us by God, it is through Christ, and for his sake; Grace is from Christ as a fountain, and by Christ as a Conduit.

3. That Christ is the preserver of grace, all the grace that is in us is *in Christ Jesus*, he keeps all our graces for us: As the beams of the Sun may be said to be the Sun, because they are preserved by their union with the Sun. *Our life is hid with Christ in God*, hid as Col. 3. 3. the life of a tree is hid in the root, and the being of a stream is hid in the fountain. And herein is the comfort of believers, that their condition is more stable and immutable and safe, then ever *Adam* was in innocency, for he had all perfections of a creature, but they were in their own keeping; but now all the grace that is in a believer is in Christ Jesus, by whom and in whom grace is safely preserved, so as it shall never perish.

The point of doctrine I observe from these words is this: Doct.

That all those measures of grace, whereof believers are partakers, they receive them in and from Jesus Christ.

In the handling of which point I will thus proceed:

1. Shew you the truth of it.

2. Give you the reasons and grounds of it.

Now

Now to prove that all grace is received in and through Christ.

1. I will shew the truth of this by many resemblances, to which Christ is compared in the Scripture.

2. By many types of Christ in the Old Testament.

3. By many expresse testimonies in the New Testament concerning this truth.

I. There are many resemblances in Scripture which do illustrate this, that all grace is from Christ Jesus.

1. He is compared to a root. *He is called the root of* Jesse, not only because he came of the stock of *David*, but that he gives grace to Jew and Gentile that do believe: for *to him shall the Gentiles seek*, as it followes in the next words. Now that the Prophet there speaks of Christ, is plain by the Apostles expresse application of that prophesie unto Christ, calling him the *root of* Jesse, *in whom the Gentiles should trust*. And Christ speaks of himselfe, *I am the Vine. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me*; the life, sap, nourishment, growth and fruitfulnesse of a branch is altogether from the root, with which the branches have union and communion.

Isa. 11. 10.

Rom. 15. 2.

Joh. 15. 1.

2. Christ is called the Head of his people; *He is the Head of the body of the Church*. Now as sense and motion is derived from the head to the members of the body; so also is grace

Col. 1 18.

grace derived from Jesus Christ to every true believer, every living member of his body.

3. Christ is called the *Sun of Righteousnesse* because as heat and light are communicated by the Sun to things here below, so there is a sweet influence of grace from Christ upon believers. As by vertue of the Sunnes influence the vegetable and sensible creatures live, move and grow; so also the life and growth of grace in the soul is from that divine influence which Jesus Christ doth shed upon believers. Mal. 4. 2.

4. Christ is compared to a fountain, *even a fountaine opened to the house of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jerusalem, *for sin and for uncleanesse.* So that as water doth stream forth in the river from the fountain, so grace flowes down from Jesus Christ upon believers, who is a fountain, where all fulnesse of grace for ever dwels, and from whence all grace is drawn and derived; and this is the first proof. Zech. 13. 1.

2. This truth may be demonstrated by the many types of Christ in the old Testament which did shadow out unto us this, that all grace is from Jesus Christ. I shall mention some.

1. *Aaron* the High Priest was to lay his *hands on the People, and to blesse them.* And herein he was a type of Christ our great and heavenly High Priest, through whom we are blessed with all grace. *God having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places* Lev. 9. 22. Eph. 1. 3. Act. 3. 26.

Nisi desuper.

ces in Christ. *Jesus Christ is sent by God to blesse his people, and to turn every one of them from their iniquities.* And therefore it is recorded by St. *Luke* that a little before the Ascension of our blessed Saviour, *he lifted his hands upon his disciples, and blessed them*: and so he doth still blesse all true believers with the spiritual blessing of grace.

Luk. 24 50

2. Another type of Christ was *Joseph*, who in many things was a type of Christ, *Joseph* was the *best beloved of his fathers children*; so was Jesus Christ, *the son of his fathers love*: Joseph *was hated of his brethren, and sold for twenty pieces of silver*; so was Jesus Christ, *he came unto his own, and his own received him not*, he was rejected by them, *and sold for thirty pieces of silver.* Joseph was *carryed into* Egypt; and so persecution *drove Christ into* Egypt *presently after he was born.* Joseph was *falsly accused and condemned*: so was *Christ.* Josephs troubles ended in his advancement; so all the troubles of Christ, *wrought for him a far more exceeding and eternall weight of glory: God having therefore highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name*, for now Christ is sate down at the right hand of the Father; But especially in this, *Joseph* did type out *Jesus Christ*, that in that dreadfull lasting famine in *Egypt*, *Joseph* had the custody of all the corne in the land, and he had the issuing out of all the Provision for bread, in all the land of *Egypt*: So the Lord Jesus is the *Lord Keeper* of all that store of grace, with

Gen. 37.3. Mat. 3.17. Col. 1.11. Gen. 37. 20,21.

Joh. 1.12. Gen. 37.28

Mat. 2.20 Gen. 39.20

Phil. 2.9.

Gen. 41. 55,56,57.

with which believers are furnished, which grace is given to help them in time of need. Jesus Christ hath the Key of *David*, he hath the Key of the treasury of grace.

3. Another type of Jesus Christ was *Iosua*, who gave unto *Israel* entrance and possession of the good land of *Canaan*. *He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Our Jesus gives his people a *better rest* then ever *Iosua* brought *Israel* unto. Psa.84.11. Heb.4.8,9.

4. Another type of Christ was the Candlestick of the tabernacle, the seven lamps whereof did give light unto the whole tabernacle. Now these *seven lamps*, what did they type out but the graces of the Spirit of Christ, for so it is said, that there were *seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.* The Holy Ghost and the graces of it, being so described by *seven spirits* in this regard, because of the variety and protection of that grace which is in the Lord Jesus, and by his Spirit communicated to all his members. Exo.25.37 Rev.4.5. Zech.4.2.

3. The third proof of this doctrine may be drawn from the consideration of those clear testimonies of this truth in the New Testament. St. *John* speaks thus of Christ that *of his fulnesse we have received, and grace for grace.* In Christ there is not only *plenty*, but *bounty*; not only an *abundance* of all grace, but a *redundance* of grace. Christians have the fulnesse of a *vessel*, but Christ hath the Joh.1.16. expounded. *Plenitudo repletiva & diffusiva.*

Plenitudo vasis Plenitudo fontis.

the fulneſſe of a *fountain*. Take a drop of water out of a veſſel, and it is not ſo full as before, but draw as much water as you pleaſe out of the Well of the water of life, and there is no want of water. From Chriſt we receive *grace for grace*, that is, ſay ſome, the grace of the New Teſtament, added to that grace which was revealed under the Old Teſtament. Or *grace for grace*, that is, ſay others, a perfection of grace according to the Perfection that is in Chriſt. As in a natural generation, the childe doth receive from his Father limme for limme, and part for part: ſo in this ſpiritual regeneration, Jeſus Chriſt (*the everlaſting Father*) doth give grace for grace. Or you may underſtand this expreſſion *grace for grace*, that Jeſus Chriſt is not only the Author of grace, but gives *grace for grace*, that is, one grace after another, *grace upon grace*; the being of grace, and the increaſe of grace are both from Chriſt. This alſo appears that Chriſt is the Author and beſtower of all grace, by that ordinary prayer wherewith the Apoſtle doth uſually cloſe up his Epiſtles, *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.* The like Prayer we have to the *Romans*, to the *Galatians*, *brethren The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit.* So alſo in the cloſe of the Epiſtles to the *Philippians*, *Theſſalonians*, and to *Timothy*, *Grace be with thee. Amen.* All this is to note that Jeſus Chriſt is the fountain from whence, and the Conduit by whom all grace

Perfectio partium, non graduum.

Iſa. 6. 9.

Gratiam novâ gratiâ cumulatam.

2 Cor. 13. 14. Rom. 16. 24 Gal. 6 18 Phil. 4. 23. 1 Theſ. 5. 28. 1 Tim. 6. 21

is

is conveyed unto believers. As in the vision that the Prophet Zechary saw, *There were two Olive-Branches, which through the two golden Pipes, did empty the golden oyle out of themselves:* So Jesus Christ, that true Olive-tree, doth drop and distil grace upon his Church, whereby they receive from his fulnesse grace for grace. Zech. 4. 12.

But in giving this honour unto Christ, do you not derogate from God the Father, when you say that all grace is from Christ? 1 *Object.*

1. It is no derogation to God the Father to ascribe this unto Christ, because *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulnes dwell.* 1. *Answ.*

2. And beside, *Christ and the Father are one.* In saying all grace is from Christ, we also say all is from the Father too; and in saying it is from the Father, we say it is from Christ too. And therefore it is an ordinary prayer prefixed in the beginning of most of the Epistles; *Grace be unto you, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* So that in the subscription, and in the inscription of each Epistle, grace is ascribed to God the Son, but so as not excluding God the Father, and to God the Father not excluding the Son. 2. *Answ.* Col. 1. 19. Joh. 10. 30 Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 2. Gal. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 2. Phil. 1. 2. Col. 1. 2. 1 Thes. 1. 1, &c.

3. And then again, Jesus Christ is commissionated and designed by the Father, to give out grace to his people: for so Christ speaks of himself, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Now it is the will of God, that from Christ believers should receive both justifying and 3. *Answ.* Joh. 6. 38.

sanctifying grace. *Our sanctification is Gods Will*, and Christ came to fulfil that will of God: for so speaks the Apostle, *Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offrings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hast pleasure therein, then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will (Oh God;) by which Will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Iesus Christ once for all.* So that the Will of God the Father, and the Will of Jesus Christ are the same in the bestowing of grace. Jesus Christ received a commission from God the Father, to bestow grace upon his people; and will you see how that Commission runs, you shal finde it in the Prophet *Isaiah*; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to binde up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Christ had a Commission under his Fathers hand and Seale, *For him hath the father sealed*: *Joseph* received authority from *Pharaoh*, and it was no dishonour to *Pharaoh* that *Ieseph* was commissionated to issue out all the stores of corne to the Egyptians in the time of that famine: no more is it any dishonour to the Father, that Jesus Christ doth bestow and convey grace upon believers.

1 Thes. 4. 3

Heb. 10. 9, 10.

Isa. 61. 1.

John 6. 27.

2. *Objct.* *But doth not this put the Spirit out of office, who is called the holy Spirit, and the Spirit of grace, because he doth work grace and holiness*

in the hearts of the People of God?

What Christ is said to work, that the holy Spirit also doth; because by the Spirit of God Christ worketh. It is a good rule, that the works of the blessed Trinity *ad extra* are undivided, all those works which are external and relative to the creatures, as to create, preserve, redeem, sanctifie, &c. are in respect of the things wrought equally common to all the Persons of the blessed Trinity. So that we may say, *what soever things that the Father doth, those things doe the Son likewise*, and those things also doth the Holy Ghost; the work of Sanctification is equally ascribed unto all the Persons. *God the Father sanctifies his people.* God the Son doth sanctifie his members, for he is their *sanctification: He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, with the washing of water through the Word.* And yet the work of Sanctification is most frequently ascribed to the Holy Ghost; *Goodnesse*, *Righteousnesse* and *Truth*, and indeed all grace being called the *fruit of the Spirit*; and the Spirit is called the *Spirit of grace and supplication, and the Spirit of holinesse and sanctification.* So our Regeneration is ascribed unto God the Father. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope.* And so also we are the children of Christ by Regeneration, for in this respect Christ is called the *Father of Eternity. Behold* (saith the Prophet

Solution.

Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.

John 5.19.

Jude v.1.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

Eph.5.25, 26.

Eph.5.9.

Gal.5.22.

1 Pet.1.3.

Isa.9.6.

Isa.18.8. phet in the name of Christ) *I and the children which thou hast given me*; and that there the Prophet speaks of Christ, is cleare from the application of it to him in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Heb.2.13. *Behold I and the children which God hath given me.* Neither is the Holy Ghost excluded from this working of grace & regeneration in us, for Christ tels *Nicodemus*, that Joh.3.3,5. *except a man be born again, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdome of God.* So it is said, that God the Father blessed *Abraham*, and yet the blessing of *Abraham* came upon the Gentiles Gal.3.14. *through Christ*, that they might receive the *promise of the Spirit.* By all which instances it doth appear, that though there are diversities of gifts, yet the same Spirit, and though there are differences of administrations, yet the same Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of all grace through the holy Spirit.

2. The reason and ground of this, why Jesus Christ is the Author, Purchaser and conveyer of grace to his People, is,

1. Because God the Father hath appointed Jesus Christ, as Mediatour, to transact the great work of sanctifying and saving his Elect.

2. Because by this shall the reproach be rowled away from Christ, who in his life time was reputed the greatest of all Malefactors, and accordingly suffered death. They were wont to say, *can any good come out of* Nazareth? God hath therefore given him

him a name above all names, that he should not only *be anointed with oyl above his fellows*, by his receiving the *Spirit without measure*, but that the oyl that was *poured upon the head of our High-Priest should run down upon the skirts of his garments*; and that grace which was abundant in him, should also be redundant to his Church, and run down, and diffuse it self to all his members.

3. To manifest that Jesus Christ was the second *Adam*, and came into the world to repaire the breaches which the sin of the first *Adam* had made. For by the fall we did not only contract upon our selves the guilt of *Adams* sin, to take off which we have need of the righteousnesse of Christ imputed, but we have drawn upon our selves the filthinesse and pollution of sin, to take away the power whereof, only the grace, holinesse, and inherent righteousnesse of Christ imputed to us doth avail: and as the first *Adam* was the Author and conveyer both of the guilt, filthinesse, and punishments of sin to his posterity; so Jesus Christ the second *Adam* conveighs the life of grace into all his. As the first *Adam* was the author to communicate natural life, as he *was made a living soule*; so the second *Adam* did communicate the spiritual life of grace as he was made *a quickning spirit*. From the first *Adam* by natural generation and propagation, we receive corruption for corruption; so from the second *Adam* we receive grace for grace.

1 Cor. 15. 45.

1. *Vse* of this Doctrine is for Confutation

1. Of the Socinians errour, who say that all grace in Christ, whether his active or passive righteousnesse, was only to qualifie his person, and to merit his own glorification, without any reference unto us, unlesse as an exemplar or patterne. But this opinion is sufficiently confuted by this Doctrine, by which hath been shown, that as all our grace is from Christ, so that abundance of grace that is in Christ is for us. As the woman hath abundance of milk in her brest, not for her self, but for her childe; and the Sun hath abundance of light, not for it self, but for the world: So Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth, but this fulnesse is in order to the filling of his members. As in the naturall body there are some special parts, that do stand as officers unto all the rest; the stomack receives much meat, not for it self, but that it might communicate it to all the members; the head hath the senses seated in it, not for it self, but for the whole body: So it is in the mystical body, whereof Christ is the head; the abundance of grace, which is treasured up in Christ, is in order to supply every member with grace. *For their sake* (saith Christ himself of his elect,) *I sanctifie* Joh. 17. 19. *my self; that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* Some do refer this to Christ, being set apart to the office of Mediatour, that it was not for his own sake, but for the sake of his members, and though

there

there be grace enough in Christ to qualifie his person, yet also there is grace enough in him to justifie our persons too, and sanctifie our natures.

2. This also reproves the errour, pride and folly of the Pelagians, Papists and Arminians, who derogate from God, and arrogate to themselves. These people like *Sampson*, have lost their spiritual strength, but do not, will not know that it is departed from them; They are poor, and yet are proud, and while they are *setting up the praise of nature, they do prove themselves the enemies of grace.* Alas, while they boast of a *liberum arbitrium*, they have cause to bewail a *servum arbitrium*, as *Luther* calls it. It is true, man by the fall did not lose the faculty it self, but he hath lost the rectitude of it. And yet proud man will be like the spider, spinning out a thread of his own, and thinking to climbe up to heaven by threads spun out of his own bowels, but let such who rejoyce in this *Mihi soli debeo*, take heed at last, *that his hope be not cut off, and that his trust become like a spiders web.* Alas poor proud wretch! who made thee to differ? *Grevincovius* the Arminian makes this proud answer to the Apostles question, *I my self made my self to differ.* This is Divinity much like that of the Heathens. *Seneca* said, *That we live, this is of God, but that we live well, that's of our selves.* And *Cicero* hath also this saying, and he tells us it is the judgment of all men, *That prosperity and successe is*

Sub laudibus naturæ latent inimici gratiæ. Aug.

Job 8. 14.

from God, and must be sought of God, but wisdom that is gotten by our selves, which gave *Augustine* occasion to passe this censure upon him; *Cicero in endeavouring to make men free, he made them sacrilegious.* But let us take heed of this proud leaven of Arminianisme, and learn from hence to be convinced of the emptinesse and insufficiency of our nature to any supernaturall good. For alas! *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* We have no grace but what we receive from Christ, *And grace is no way grace unlesse it be every way free.* We have little reason to boast of the freedome of our will to any thing that is spiritually good, because our wil is not *free* til it be by grace *made free.* We have no power to become the sons of God, *till it be given us to believe on his name, and such are born not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Voluntas liberata liberata. Aug.

XV. Sermon At *Lawrence Jury, London.* April 27. 1651. This was the last Sermon that ever *Mr. Love* preached.

2 Tim. 2. 1.

——My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

From the last clause in this text, *viz. Grace that is in Christ Jesus*, we have gathered this observation, that

All those measures of grace whereof believers are partakers, they doe receive them

in

in and from Jesus Christ.

That this is so, we have proved, not onely by the types of the Old Testament, but also by the expresse testimony of the New Testament, and have also given the grounds and reasons of this point, with some Application, by way of reproofe and confutation of the Arminian and Socinian errours. It remains we make some further Application of this point, and so conclude the whole discourse.

2. *Use* is by way of exhortation unto these duties following.

1. Dost thou receive all thy grace from Jesus Christ, then labour to be humble in the acknowledgement of this. Let the consideration and conscientious application of this doctrine, quell all boasting in us of any excellency received. *Our wisdom, righteousnesse, and sanctification, and redemption, are all from Christ, and therefore he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.* Consider, *who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why didst thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?* Who but a proud foole would magnifie himselfe in that, which either another giveth him, or another hath done for him. We count it an odious pride and folly in a man to boast himselfe of that which another hath done. And therefore the Apostle professeth, that he did not carry himselfe as those false teachers had done, who

1 Cor. 1. 30 31.

2 Cor 4. 7.

who were crept into the Church of *Corinth*, saith the Apostle, *We doe not boast of things beyond our measure, that is, of other mens labours, nor boast in another mans line of things made ready to our hand.* Now all grace is made ready to our hands, and is onely the worke of Jesus Christ in us, *who worketh all our works for us.* *Ammianus Marcellinus* tels us of one *Lampadius*, a great person in *Rome*, who in all parts of the City, where other men had bestowed cost in building, he would set up his own name, not as a Repairer of the work, but as the chiefe Builder. Such folly are they guilty of, who wil set their owne names before Gods, over the work of grace in their own soules. *Oh remember that boasting is excluded by the law of faith.* Faith is that grace which emptieth the creature of all its conceited excellencies, and faith is that grace which wil give God the praise of the glory of all his grace. Shall the groom of the stable boast of his masters horses? and the Stage-player of his borrowed robes? shall the mud wall be proud that the Sun-shines upon it? We must say of all the good that is in us, as the young man said to the Prophet of his hatchet, *Alas Master, it was borrowed.* The Church of God is compared to the *Moon.* Now all the light which the Moon giveth to the world, she doth but distribute what is lent her; all our graces and the shining of them, whereby our light is seen before men, is but a borrowed light from the Sun of righte

2 Cor. 10. 13, 16.

Ego & Deus meus.

Rom. 3. 27.

2 King. 6. 5 Cant. 6. 10. *Lucrum acceptam referre.*

righteousnesse. *David* sets us an excellent pattern, when he makes that humble acknowledgement: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine (Oh Lord) is the greatnesse, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in heaven or in earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom (Oh Lord) and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thine hand is power and might, and in thy hand is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee, Oh Lord our God all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine own name, commeth of thine hand, and is all thine own;* which is an excellent pattern of humility after inlargement in duty. *David* and the people had offered both bountifully and willingly towards the house of God, the Lord had enlarged both their hearts and their hands. Now all they did for God, is here ascribed to Gods grace and bounty towards them. It is excellent humility to ascribe our enlargement of Gods service, to the enlargement of Gods grace towards us; the way to have grace increased, is humbly to acknowledge from whence we receive every grace.

1 Chron. 29.10,11, 12,13,15, 16.

2. Ascribe unto Jesus Christ the glory of all

all the grace you have been made partakers of. Thus did *Paul* upon all occasions, *I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me, and by the grace of God I am what I am. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* It was wel done of that good and faithfull servant to say, *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds*; he doth not say, *Lord, my pains*, but *thy pound hath gained.* When we give God the glory of his grace, God wil give us the comfort and increase of our grace. Learn therefore to ascribe unto Christ, the initial, progressive, & consummative work of grace in your soule, *Jesus Christ only, who hath begun a good work in you, wil perform it until his own day.* Jesus Christ is *the author and finisher of our faith.* He is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*. And therefore the Apostle prayes, *The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you.* Grace is rather like *Manna* that comes from heaven, then the *Corn* that grows out of the earth. Grace is inspired from heaven. Gifts and parts are acquired by industry and pains here on earth. What God said by way of comparison between *Canaan* and *Egypt*, is very applicable to this purpose. For thus the Lord speaks to *Israel*, *The Land whither thou goest in to possesse it, is not as the Land of Egypt, whence thou camest out, where thou sowest thy seed,*

1 Cor. 15. 10.

Gal. 2. 20.

Luk. 19. 16

Phil. 1. 6. Heb. 12. 2. Rev. 1. 8.

1 Pet. 5. 10.

Deut. 11. 10, 11, 12,

seed, and watereſt it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs, but the Land whither ye go to poſſeſſe it, is a land of hils and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord thy God careth for. Thus it is with grace and nature; nature may be, and is improved with induſtry and pains, and is like *Egypt*, which might be watered by the foot, *i. e.* with digging gutters and trenches, which is the labour of the foot, to let in the ſtreams of the river of *Nilus*, when he yeerly overflows his banks, but grace is like the rain from heaven, which onely falleth where God doth appoint, who cauſeth it to rain upon one City, and not upon another, and one piece is rained upon, and the piece whereupon it raineth not, withereth. Amos 4.7.

3. Diſclaim all merit and ſelf-ſufficiency, for ſo much as we arrogate to our own merit, ſo much as we derogate from the free grace and mercy of God. If with *Ephraim* God hath enlarged his grace towards thee, that *thou art like a green fig-tree*, yet let God have the glory of all thy fruitfulneſſe, and let him ſay, *from me is thy fruit found.* Oh conſider, *that thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee.* Say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name do we give the praiſe.* A gracious heart knows his own inability, and his own inſufficiency and imperfection, that he is unable to overcome the leaſt ſin though never ſo ſmall, to exerciſe any grace though never ſo weak, to perform the leaſt duty, though never Hoſ. 14.8. Rom. 11. 18.

never so easie; and as we have cause to acknowledge our inability, so also our sinfull imperfections; if God should enter into judgement with us, he might condemne us, not only for our worst sins, but for our best duties.

4. Have an eye to Jesus Christ; *Look up to him the author and finisher of our faith.* The word *looking unto*, signifies in the original, such a looking unto, as that we look off those things which may divert our looking up to Jesus. Labour (my beloved) to look still unto Christ as the author of grace, when you have the greatest exercise, or increase, or comfort of your grace. Say when thou hast the greatest strength of grace, as *Iehoshaphat* did, when he had that great strength of men 500000. *Lord, we know not what to do, only our eyes are upon thee.* There are these three things which we should eye in Christ giving us grace.

Heb. 12. 2. Ἀφορῶντες.

2 Chro. 20. 12.

1. How voluntarily and freely Jesus Christ doth issue out his grace to his people. Never did a mother more willingly give her child suck, when her breasts did ake and were ready to break, then Jesus Christ doth bestow grace upon his people. Christ doth not like a merchant sell his grace, but like a King freely bestowes all: see the tenor of the Covenant of grace how free it was, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eate, yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without*

Isa. 55. 1.

price.

price. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely; nothing is so free as grace: it is offered and is bestowed upon the freest termes imaginable. All that Christ requires, is but our receiving it. It is the delight of Christ to shew mercy, and bestow grace upon his people. It is the meat of Christ to do the Will of God that sent him, and to finish his work. Never was man more willing to eat his meat when he is hungry, then Jesus Christ was to do good and bestow grace upon them that wanted it. So also it is said of Christ in Psal. 72. (which is clearly a prophesie of Jesus Christ) that he should come down like raine upon the mowen grasse, and as showers that water the earth. Now there is nothing comes down more sweetly and freely, then the rain upon a dry and thirsty ground.

Rev. 22. 17

Prov. 8. 31.

Joh. 4. 34.

Psal. 72. 6

2. Secondly, look unto Jesus the Author of grace, how irresistibly he doth communicate his grace. *I will work, and who can let it?* It's true, not only of Gods eternal deliverances, but is as true of Gods working grace in the hearts of his people. *Who shall let?*

Isa. 43. 13.

1. Satan shall not, for though he be a strong man, and armed, and hath got possession, yet when Christ comes, he is ἰσχυρότερος, stronger then Satan.

2. Sin shall not be able to hinder Gods work of grace. Grace shall be too hard for the strongest opposition, that is made against it. It is true, a man may and doth resist the grace

grace of God, with a gainsaying and contradicting resistance, but not with an overcoming resistance.

3. Thirdly, look up to Jesus the bestower of grace, how proportionably he gives grace suitable, and answerable to thy temptations and need. 1 Cor. 12. 11. *God divides to every one his grace and gifts, severally as he will*, and yet he gives grace that shall be enough. 2 Cor. 12. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee*, said God to *Paul*, sufficient to quell corruptions, sufficient to repell temptation, sufficient to make thee wait upon me, till I give thee deliverance.

5. Be exhorted to have recourse to Jesus Christ for supply of grace. Go to Jesus, and by the Prayer of faith approach to the Throne of grace, and beg grace to help thee in time of need. Go unto God by Christ, and God through Christ will supply all your wants. Phil. 4. 19. ὁ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν. *My God*, saith *Paul* to the *Philippians*, *shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ*. Go to this God, and expresse your selves before his throne, with sensible complaints, and earnest requests, say, Lord, seeing there is so much water in the fountain, why should my cisterne be empty? such fulnesse of grace in Christ, and so little grace in my heart? Psal. 58. 18. Lord, hast thou not *gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also*, and that's the worst that can be said of me, and hast thou not a blessing for me also?

3. *Use* of caution, though we say that all grace is in and from Christ.

1. This

1. This should not cut off our endeavours after grace: we should so earnestly labour to get grace, as if there were no way to have it but by our endeavours; we should so strive to get heaven, as if it were to be gotten by by our fingers, by our own pains. Gods promises and purposes of giving grace should rather quicken, and greaten, then any ways slacken our endeavours after grace. See how the apostle makes Gods working grace in us, a ground why we should work: *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* And again, *I know the thoughts that I think towards you (saith the Lord,) thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*; but see also how God joyns their *duty* with his *promise*, the *means* unto the *end*: *Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shal go, and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* So also in the propheſie of *Ezekiel*, the Lord had promised to do great things for them, and then addes, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of* Israel, *to do it for them.* Gods promise to *David* to build him an house, did not at all slack his prayer to God for that purpose; for thus we finde *David* praying, *Thou, O my God hast told thy servant, that thou wilt build him an house, therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. And now Lord (thou art God, and hast promised this goodnesse to thy servant) now therefore let it please*

Cant. 1.

Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Jer. 29. 11, 12.

Ezek. 36. 37.

1 Chro 17. 25, 26, 27.

thee to blesse the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever, for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever. Thus also did *Paul, By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vaine, but I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.* See how he joyns Gods grace and his own indeavours together. Thou must then so indeavour after grace, as if it were to be gotten by *labour*, and not bestowed by *favour*, yet when thou hast done all thou canst, thou must acknowledge grace to be free, as if thou hadst not laboured at all.

1 Cor. 15, 10.

Cant. 2. 2. Though there be abundance of grace in Christ, yet let all such as have no interest in Christ, take heed how they flatter themselves into a conceit, that they shall receive grace frō Christ; Interest in the Person, gives communication of his grace. As it was in Christs Person, he could not have had those excellencies and attributes which were in God, had not his two natures humane and divine been personally united in him. And therefore it is said by vertue of the hypostatical union, that *in him*, i. e. *in his Person, dwelleth all the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily.* So unlesse there be that mystical union between Christ and us, we could not be Partakers *nor grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Iesus. Vnion is the ground of Communion*, and therefore we read first of *receiving Christ*, and then afterwards of *receiving of his fulnesse grace for*

Col. 2. 9.

Joh. 1. 12, 16. compared.

grace

grace. Though thou art near Christ by Profession, yet if thou art not one with Christ by faith, thou canst not receive any vertue from him. If a man tie food to any part of his body, it will not nourish him, because it is not received, concocted or concorporated, that only nourishes, which becomes one and the same substance with us. So we receive strength and increase of grace from Christ, as we are united unto him by faith. Take a graft, and tie it to a tree, and it brings forth no fruit, but let it be united unto a tree by implantation, then the graft growes fruitful: so *without Christ*, (or as it is in the Original) *separate from Christ you can do nothing*. He that by faith is not planted together in the likeneſſe of Christs death, shall never receive spiritual nourishment from him. He that doth not abide in Christ, is cast forth *as a Branch*, he was never a true Branch, only seemed to be one. Christ is a fountain of grace, but it is faith that draws out of this fountain. Christ is a treasury of grace, but it is faith that unlocks this treasury. By our communion with Christ we receive grace for grace. We are made by love, meekneſſe and patience like unto Christ, but by faith we are made one with Christ; and that Union is the cause of communion, and therefore Christleſſe persons are graceleſſe persons.

John 15.5. χωρὶς ἐμοῦ. Rom.6.5.

Joh 15.6. ἐξηράνθη ὡς τὸ κλῆμα.

Caut. 3.

3. If men want grace, yet let them know, that not Christ, but themselves are to blame-

med. There is fulneſſe in Chriſt, there is grace enough in Chriſt, in him there is fulneſſe of ſufficiency, of efficiency, and of redundancy; but if a veſſel be ſtopt, caſt it into the Sea, and it will receive no water; and the fault is in the veſſel which is ſtopt, there is no want of water in the Sea. They that have the river-water or conduit-water come into their houſes, if no water come, you muſt not conclude there is no water in the river or fountain, but that the Pipes are either ſtopt or broken; So it is, if ever you are ſtraitened, you are ſtraitned in your own bowels, and not ſtraitened in your God. If a houſe be dark, it is not for any want of light in the Sun, but for want of windowes in the houſe: So if thou wanteſt grace, it is not for want of grace in Chriſt, but for want of faith in thy ſoul, to draw and derive more grace from Chriſt.

Cant. 4.

4. Envy not the grace of God in others. Though Chriſt ſhould beſtow more grace on others then on thee, *yet thy eye muſt not be evil, becauſe he is good.* Thou ſhouldſt not have an *envious eye*, becauſe Chriſt hath a *bountiful hand.* It is not only a fault in wicked men, to envy the grace that is in good men, as *Cain* envied *Abel, becauſe his ſacrifice was accepted, and his own rejected*, but alſo even good men are too apt to envy one another. *Joſephs* brethren envied their brother, becauſe he was beloved of his father, and *Peter* (it is thought) envied *John* the beloved

Mat. 20 15

John 21, 20, 21.

diſciple.

disciple. But take heed of envy, it's dishonourable to God, and often hinders us from receiving mercy and grace from God. To envy Christs dispensing of his grace, to whom and in what measure he pleases, is unbecoming a Christian; to rejoyce in others happinesse, is to do as the Angels of heaven; to envy others good is like the devils in hell. Would a father take it well that his children fall out about their portions, which their father hath given them. God is absolutely free, to give one or two, or five talents, as he pleases, and if another have more grace then thou, yet be thankful for that grace thou hast, and envy no man.

Lastly, Lessen not thy grace thou hast received. As there is no sin small, because it is an offence against the great God: so there is no grace little, because it comes from the great God. Unthankfulnesse hinders this oyl from running. As a man must not be contented with the greatest measure of grace, so he must not be unthankful for the least measure of grace. Consider, it is Jesus Christ that hath begun the work of grace: that there is *some little good wrought in thee*, is the work of Christ, and he that hath begun a good work will also finish it; he that hath given grace a *being in thy soul*, *will also strengthen thee with strength in thy soul*, *and perfect what concerneth thee.* Do not thou thy self quench the flax that begins to smoak, nor break the reed that is bruised, but be

Cant. 5.

Psal. 138. 8.

thankful to Christ that hath handled this smoaking flax, and wait upon him, who will so accomplish his work, that he will send forth judgement unto victory.

Mat. 12. 20

Job 30. 23.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

A Funeral Sermon preached by Mr Love at the Funeral of Mistris B. at *Lawrence Jwry London.* April 29. 1651. being the last Sermon that ever he preached

IN the handling of these words 'tis needfull I should dispatch these two things.

1. Give you the scope.
2. The sense of the words.

For the first, the scope of the words, because they are usher'd in with an illative or causal particle (*For*) which carries a reference to somewhat that goeth before, and that you may distinctly take notice of the reference, you must look back to the 18. verse of this chapter, there *Iob* tells you of a strong disease under which he laboured, *by the great force of my disease is my garment changed, it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.* It seemes the disease was so strong upon him, it even strangled his breath, it was as a collar about his neck, upon the sense of this his disease, he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* Now take a hint from the scope and

Vers. 18.

contex

context, that *sicknesses and diseases they should be remembrancers of us about our dying.* Sick men should alwayes think with themselves they are dying men, and they that die daily, need not fear dying suddenly. So I come to the sense of the words, *I know.* It is not to be understood of a notional or speculative knowledge, that doth signifie a bare and naked knowledge of a general truth; but such kinde of knowledge as is practical and experimental: and so also did *Junius* translate it. This experimental knowledge wrought in *Iob* holy preparations for death, *I know*, and by experience can tell, I have such a kinde of knowledge, that hath practicalnesse and experience in it. (*That thou wilt bring me to death*) This shewed the holinesse of *Iob* in opposition to the doctrine of the Heathens, who guest that all such events fell out by fate and fortune, and not by the determinate decree and counsel of the most High. (*And to the house appointed for all living.*) Though he doth not speake here where this house is, yet it doth in *Iob.* 17. 13. *If I wait, the grave is mine house, and I have made my bed in the darknesse.* Now that which was his house, must be the house of all living, that is, the grave. Now the grave is compared to an house. 1. Alluding to the Egyptian Sepulchres, which were made like a house with several arched rooms. 2. Because there we dwell in silence. Thus ye have the words briefly paraphrased unto you. Now

Non solùm eam notam, sed quasi peculiari experientiâ sibi persuasam, significat. Pined. *Experior.* Jun.

Job 17.13.

I shall give you some practical deduction from them, 1. *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death.* These words are the gracious speech of *Iob*, touching his own mortality, and in them we have three particulars.

1. The Rationality of this speech. He brings it in with an illative. *For*,

2. The Particularity of it. He drawes a particular meditation of death, &c. *Me.*

3. The piety of it, he acknowledges Gods hand in bringing him to death. *Thou*, and not chance or fortune.

For the first, the Rationality of it. Holy *Iob* doth not speak of his death without some cause, but for the ground and reason foregoing. *By the great force of my disease is my garment changed, it binds me about as the Collar of my Coat*; and then he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know thou wilt bring me to death.* From thence observe,

Point 1. *That it is a very Rationall thing in weaknesse to have holy meditations about death.* Iob lay under a disease, that even was ready to choak and strangle him, and then he breaks out into this holy meditation, *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, &c.* It is observable, the Ancients take notice that *David* made three Psalmes, when he lay upon his sick-bed, *Psalm.* 6. *Psalm* 30. *Psalm* 39. and in all those Psalmes there are divine raptures and holy meditations about death. *Iob.* 17. 1. *My breath is corrupt, my dayes are extinct, the grave is ready for me.* He doth not mean an ill savour

in

in his breath, but it was an obstruction and stopping in his breath, that is, he was *short-breathed, and strained under a violent disease.* It is conceived that *Job* had that disease which is called the Tissick, and the consideration of this disease, made him think that the grave was ready for him. So *Heman* lay under a violent disease, *Psal.*88.3,4,5: *For my soul is full of trouble, and my life draws nigh to the grave, I am accounted with them that go down into the pit, I am as a man that hath no strength, free among the dead, like the slain that lye in the grave, whom thou remembrest no more, and they are cut off from thy hands.* When sickness is in the chamber, then death is at the window. Diseases are but the messengers, harbingers and fore-runners of death; in the Prophets phrase, *Death is come up into our windowes*: When diseases are in the house, then death is at the threshold. So *Job* reckoneth, *When I lye down, I say, when shall I rise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day,* and then he saith, *My flesh is clothed with wormes, and clods of dust. My skin is broken, and become loathsome.*

Pſa.88.3,4 5.

Ier. 9.21.

Job 7.4,5.

First *Use*, is to condemn those, that when they lye on a sick-bed, they hope for life, but never think of death, their own guiltinesse and their own wickednesse of living doth so fill them with fear and horrour, that the thoughts of death are irksome and tedious to them. Just like *Lewis* the eleventh

Use 1.

King

King of *France*, when he lay sick of a dangerous disease, he charged his servants and attendants, that they should not speak of death in his hearing. Many mens bodies are Magazines and Hospitals of diseases, who when they are living never think of death, though there is but little betwixt them and the grave.

Use 2. Second *Use*, is to those that are healthful and strong; 'tis true, diseases are the immediate harbingers and forerunners of death in an ordinary way, yet you may soon dye though a disease seize not on you. As the fruits of a tree do more perish by extraordinary windes and tempests, then do stay upon the tree, and are gathered by the husbandman: So violent diseases may soon kill you, though marrow be in your bones, and strength in your joynts. *Paracelsus* a skilful Physician, he gloryed, that if any man would follow his Physical Prescriptions, he should not dye any violent death, but meerly through age, and yet that boasting man before he was forty yeares of age, he himself dyed of a Feaver. Thus I have done with the first consideration, the Reasonablenesse of this; I am under a sore disease, and therefore I do think of death.

Secondly, the Particularity of *Jobs* speech is to be observed. *Job* doth not stand upon that general conclusion, *There is no man that liveth but he shall see death*, Psal. 88. 48. He doth not speak in general so, but *I know*

I

I must die. From thence observe this point,

That general Conclusions about death, should be inforced upon the soul by particular applications. Beloved, we should not only have general notions and empty speculations about death, but practical and particular conclusions concerning our death, such as may lay an awe upon the conscience. Thus in the case of the godly, said Eliphaz, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of Corn cometh in his season;* and then he addes, *vers.* 27. *Lo this, we have searched it, heare it, and know thou it for thy good.* General Conclusions that all must dye, must be enforced upon the soul with particular applications, to turne you from the world, to beget in you serious thoughts touching your future and eternall welfare. General truths do not carry that force upon the conscience, unlesse they are drawn by applicative inference; and therefore *Ps.* 73. *ult.* The Psalmist saith not only *It is good to draw near unto God*, but *it is good for me.* Doct. 2. Job 5.26. 27.

The third particular, is the Piety of *Jobs* speech, in these words, *Thou wilt bring me to death.* Now there are three particulars in it which note *Jobs* Faith and Piety.

1. He doth not ascribe dying to fate and fortune, but to the Providence of the most High. From thence observe,

That it is the property of the godly, to see Gods hand in taking away men by death. It was but Doct. 3.

the

the dotage of the Heathen that knew not God, to ascribe events to blind fortune, and it was the corruption of the *Chaldeans* to overlook the Deity in all fatal events; Yet *Iob* he desired to see and submit to death, and to Gods hand in bringing it upon him. *Thou wilt bring me to death.* Another thing observable is this, *I know thou wilt bring me to death.* It is not a notional and bare knowledge of the understanding, but such a kinde of knowledge that is considerate and practical, which works upon the affections. From thence observe,

Doct. 4. *That though all men do know notionally they must dye, yet only godly men know it practically and considerately.* To know practically of your dying, consider before hand, how shall I do to launch into the eternal gulfe? what shall become of me in another world, when I leave this? Is my peace made with God? Is my person justified? Am I in a state of grace? Now *Iobs* speech hath latitude in it, *I know thou wilt bring me to death*, that is, I do so know it, that I will provide for it, and I will prepare for it, and I will lay a foundation for eternal life. *Solomon* speaking of Funeral solemnity, saith he, *It is better to go to the house of mourning, then to go to the house of feasting, that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.* But all men that do do not lay death to heart, they may perhaps talk of death at a Funeral, but the living they shall lay it to heart, *lay it upon the heart,*

Eccl. 7. 2.

יתן אל לבו

as

as the Hebrew, they shall lay it to heart, and lay it upon their hearts, so *Tremellius*. A wicked man layes it upon his tongue, but a godly man layes this truth upon his heart. There is none but a godly man, that so knowes any thing of dying, as to know it so practically, affectionately and considerately, and so as to do these three things.

Dabit ad Cor suum Ar. Mont. Inditurus ist istud animo suo. Tremel.

1. None but a godly man considers of his dying, that he dies deservedly, he tastes the bitternesse, and feels the burden of sin in his disease and sense of approaching death, he considers with himself, that it is not a disease that will bring him to his grave, but the sins of his life that kill him.

2. None knowes that he must dye so as a godly man, whose care is to dye prepared-ly. A godly man he knows he must dye, and this knowledge makes him prepare for a dying time, to live every day as his last day. The Prophet he spake of truth in the former part of *Psal.* 90. *that the dayes of man are threescore and ten.* See what follows, *so teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*, he doth mean by numbering our dayes, to live so exactly as to count the number of our dayes to be so few, every day, as if this were the last day; and this time as the time of the coming of Christ to judgement.

Psal. 90 12.

3. None but a godly man knows of his dying, so as to consider that therein is necessity that sin must dye in him before his body dies.

dies. Seneca an Heathen could say, *Let thy vices dye before thee.* There must not be only a suspension, but a mortification of sin. A godly man considers, though I live blamelesly, that men cannot say, Black is mine eye to any outward practice, yet I must have my inward lusts and corruptions dye before my body dyes: and therefore they ought to be conversant in things that tend to mortification: this is to know death considerately and affectionately; whereas wicked men consider of death notionally, their senses tell them that all must die. They say all men, men, young and old, rich and poor must dye; but this is but matter of discourse in them, but the godly know it with savoury knowledge.

Thirdly, *Iobs* Piety was, in that he doth represent death to himself, not in a formidable and dreadful way, but under a comfortable representation; *For I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house, &c.* He doth represent the grave under the notion of a house, as he represents it elsewhere. From thence observe this point.

Doct. 5. *That a child of God that hath not allowed guile upon his conscience, he may and ought to represent death to himself in such familiar representations, as may make it less dreadful and more desirable.* Sometimes it is represented as going to bed, *Isa.* 57. 2. *They shall rest in their beds.* A godly man when he lyeth upon his death-bed, and by sickness in a way of his life, rol-

ling

sing to and fro till the dawning of the day, let him think the grave will be but a bed of rest unto him; so death is often stiled a sleep. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Dan. 12. 2. Death is embalmed with sweet and comfortable language. *The grave is the house for all the living to be lodged in.* Eccl. 6. *If I wait, the grave is mine house, I have made my bed in the darkness.* Job 17. 13. The grave is the house that I must go to, as after a hard dayes labour in my house I go to bed in a dark night: So we go to our beds, as into our graves for a long night; going to bed is but for a short night, but going to the grave is for a long night; death is sometimes represented with dreadful considerations, but with amiableness too. There is an abhorrency in nature against death, it is embalmed by Jesus Christ; he lay in the grave three dayes, to embalme the grave to you, though your beds be cloudy and dark, yet ye rest in them till the Resurrection-day. For the opening of the doctrine.

I shall dispatch these two Queries.

1. I shall shew you, why the grave is compared to an house.

2. I shall shew you, what kinde of house the grave is.

For the first Query, why the grave is compared to an house? Query 1.

1. This Reason some Authors give, because in

in ancient times, (as hath been hinted) among the Egyptians their graves and sepulchres, they were made after the fashion of houses, with Arches, and such kind of superstructures; therefore they say it is called an house.

2 Other Authors give this reason, because that as a man after a dayes labour abroad, he comes to his house for rest, so a man after a lifes labour in this world, he comes to his grave, as to his house for rest.

Query 2. The second Query is this, what kinde of house is the grave? Now I will give you these four properties of this house. 1. It is a desolate and a lonesome house. 2. It is a dark house. 4 It is an old house. 4 It is a silent house. For the first, the grave is

Job 3.14. 1. *A desolate and a lonesome house. I shall be,* said *Iob, with Kings & Counsellors of the earth which build desolate places for themselves,* that is, they build tombs, and monuments where they shall lye; and then they shall leave all their attendance. *When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down into the pit, that thou be not inhabited.* Job 17.14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my Father, and to the wormes, Thou art my mother and my sister:* there is all the company you will have, corruption and the wormes; friends bring you to your grave, and there they leave you.

Ezek. 26. 20.

2. Your

2. Your grave is a dark house, *I have made my bed in the darkness*, that is, in the grave. The grave is like the sleeping room in a house, not like the dining room and working room. The dining room is to be light, and so the working room, but the sleeping room is dark. 'Tis but the stopping of the mouth of the grave, and it is but the drawing of the Curtains of the bed, where thou shalt lye in darkness till the Resurrection-day. In the grave there is neither the light of the body, which is the eye; nor the light of the aire, which is the Sun: the Sun it shall not shine there, nor the body see there: Therefore *Eccl.* 11.9. *Rejoyce, Oh young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheere thee in the dayes of thy youth, and walk in the wayes of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement.* And *vers.* 8. *He had said remember the dayes of darkness; for they shall be many.* The meaning is this, The continuance in the grave, which is the house of darkness, shall be long, even to the end of the world.

3. The grave is an old house, as old as *Adam*, he digged his grave with his owne fingers; *Wherefore as by one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Rom. 5.12. The grave it is a lasting house, a house where thou must stay a great while. *Eccles.* 12.5. *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is*

high, and fear shall be in the way, and the Almond tree shall flourish, and the Grashopper shall be a burden, and desire shall faile, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets, 'Tis a long home, a kinde of a house of eternity, a long while till Christs comming to judgement, our long home, in opposition to our present houses, that is, our short home. Your houses are your short homes, but the graves are your long homes.

4. The grave is a silent house, *Psal.* 31.17. *Let me not be ashamed, Oh Lord, for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed and let them be silent in the grave.* The Psalmist prayes here for deliverance from his Persecutors, here is nothing but clamour, persecution and opposition, and one shall not have a good word from them. But as *Iob* comforts himself in the grave, *There the voice of the Oppressor shall not be heard:* So may we, we shall be at rest and silence there, there the weary shall be at rest, and there the Prisoners shall rest together. For the Uses of this point.

Job 3.18.

The first *Use*, is an use of comfort to the godly, they may be comforted upon this doctrine. This doctrine is a doctrine that is dreadful to wicked men, their graves are dungeons to them; but to Gods children the grave is an house. Now you may be comforted upon these four considerations.

1 That though the grave be an house, yet be comforted, it is a resting house, *Iob* 3. 17. *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there*

Job 3.17, 18.

the

the weary be at rest. He speaks here of the grave in *vers.* 13. *For now should I have lien still and been quiet, I should have slept, then had I been at rest.* There is no work to be done in this house, *Eccles.* 9.10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor devise, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* Isa. 57.2. *They shall rest in their beds.*

2. That though the grave be a house, yet be comforted, it is but a sleeping house, it is not a house where thou shalt be everlastingly. Beloved though it be a house, yet it is but a sleeping house; it shall not alwayes keep your bodies; that is the meaning of *Pauls* exultation: *O death, where is thy sting? Oh grave where is thy victory?* He refers it to the Resurrection; the grave though it compasse us, yet it shall not conquer us. 1 Cor. 15. 57.

1. Though the grave be a house, yet be comforted, it is but a hiding house, such a house as is but a hiding place for Gods people. *Job.* 14.13. *Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me in secret untill thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me.* Times may be so calamitous, that there may be more safety under ground then above ground, they that have layen a long time in their graves, may be more happy then those that are living, *Isa.* 26.20. *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy door about thee, hide thy self, as if it were for a little moment* Isa. 26.20.

until the indignation be overpast. Though some refer this to a temporal deliverance, yet others refer it to the grave, where God lodges his children, when he takes them from the evil to come.

Though the grave be a house, yet be comforted it is a perfumed house, a house imbalmed and perfumed by Christs lying in the grave. All the acts that Christ did, they were for our sakes. Christ died to save us by dying. Christ lay buried in the grave, to make the grave a bed of rest, he rose again from the dead to sanctifie our resurrection, and by his presence there he hath perfumed this bed; this house the grave.

Second *Use* for instruction. 1. Here is matter of meditation; when you are in your own houses, bethink your selves thus, Now I am here walking in my house, from chamber to chamber, but ere long my chamber shall be in the dust. Now I am comming to my bed in a dark night, but ere long God wil put out the candle of my life, and wil lay me in the grave, as in a bed of darkness. Now I am in my own house, but ere long my house wil cast me out to my grave, and that is the house that wil take me in.

2. Let it check in you all covetous and inordinate desires after worldly things; Thou shalt come from lying in the dark house in the womb, to lye in the dark house of the grave. Oh what a vast company of inordinat and luxurious desires are there in the hearts

of

of men. In the womb one foot, in the cradle three foot wil content you, and in the grave six foot, but when thou livest in the world a whole world wil not content you, there is such inordinate and luxurious desires in mens hearts, when they have all affluence and confluence of creature-comforts; Now they must have their variety of Houses, a Countrey-house, a Summer-house, a Winter house, yet thou must exchange thy many houses for one house. 'Tis worthy your notice that passage you read of in Scripture, 1 *Sam.* 10.24. *Samuel* when he had anointed *Saul* King, and the people had chosen him; what signal doth he give him to confirme him anointed, it was to goe to *Rachels* Sepulchre; now the reason is this, that he might not be glutted with the preferments & honours he was entring upon. The Emperours of *Constantinople*, in their inaugurations, on their Coronation daies, had a Mason came and shewed them severall Marble-stones, and asked them to choose which of those should be made ready for their Grave-stone. And so we read of *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, that he had his Tombe in his garden to check the pleasures of the place. Now in thy house thou hast superfluity and abundance. I can goe now to variety of houses; but one day thou shalt leave all thy houses, and go to one house, and there leave all your company and your friends.

Isa 57.1. *Elige ab his saxis ex quo invictissime Cæsar ipse tibi tumulum me fabricare velis.*

But how can this be true, when the Scripture Object. 1.

ture saith, Joh. 8. 51. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

To this I answer, that this Scripture intends not a natural and corporal death, but a spiritual and eternal death, and it is said, John 11. 25, 26. *I am the resurrection and the life, he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die:* That is, though he die naturally, yet he shall live eternally.

2. *Object.* *But you will say,* Enoch *was not buried, and* Elijah *was carried up in a chariot.*

Sol. Particular examples doe not frustrate general rules; though they were not laid in their graves, yet they underwent something equivalent to death. There was a particular reason why God translates *Enoch* and *Elijah*, because they were to be types of Christs Resurrection, and pledges of ours.

3. *Obj.* *But some wil say, as in* 1 Cor. 15. 51. *We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed; therefore at the last day they shall not be buried, and the grave not the house of all men, but those that are then living shall be suddenly carried up to Heaven.*

Sol. To this I answer, that at the last day, though men shall not come to the grave, yet they shall be taken up when the trumpet shall sound, and shall goe through the fire, and they shall in their translation undergoe something that shall be equi-

equivalent to a death, and to a buriall.

2. Lastly, we are tied to this decree of death, though God be not tied, *Rom.*5.14. and *Rom.*9.27. By those places we are to understand, all men doe deserve to die, though God may exempt some, as those that live to see the end of the world, from a death as ours is. Death is the end of all men, and the grave is the house appointed for all living. *Death hath passed upon all men because all have sinned.* All deserve to die; and even those that are changed at the last day undergo something equivalent to death it selfe.

Rom.5.13. *De jure mortis in omnes homines loquitur Apostolus, licet Deus aliquos à morte possit eximere.* Rivet.

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